CHAPTER 5
OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Offensive action is the decisive form of battle. The primary purpose of the offense is to defeat, destroy, or neutralize an enemy force. A commander may also take offensive actions to deceive or divert the enemy, deprive him of resources or decisive terrain, develop intelligence, or hold an enemy in position. Even in the defense, offensive action is normally required to destroy an attacker and exploit success. The key to a successful offensive operation is to identify the enemy's decisive point and choose a form of maneuver that avoids the enemy's strength and masses overwhelming combat power in order to achieve a result with respect to terrain, enemy, and time that will accomplish the unit's purpose. This chapter discusses the basics of the offense, which apply to all offensive actions. It discusses the concept of coordinated mechanized infantry and armor attacks and the planning and conduct of offensive operations.

The four types of offensive actions are movement to contact, attack, exploitation, and pursuit. The TF seizes, retains, and exploits the initiative in conducting offensive operations. Offensive operations are either force-oriented (focused on the enemy) or terrain-oriented (focused on seizing or securing terrain and facilities). Most offensive operations at TF level combine distinct subunit operations that have force or terrain orientations.

Section I. FUNDAMENTALS OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The TF gains and maintains the initiative and keeps constant pressure on the enemy throughout his battle space. The TF transitions from one offensive action to another without pausing. Planning and preparing for the next operation and for follow-on operations occur simultaneously with execution of the current action.

5-1. CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Success in offensive operations depends on the proper application of the fundamental characteristics of the offense discussed in the following paragraphs. The TF's ability to maneuver mounted or dismounted makes flexibility a key attribute.

a. **Surprise**. A force achieves surprise by attacking the enemy at a time or place and in a manner for which the enemy is not physically or mentally ready. The TF commander must have sufficient information for a clear understanding of his current state in relation to the enemy and environment, a sound understanding of what the end state is for the assigned mission, and a vision of how to move his force from the current situation to the end state. Surprise is more readily attainable because of the TF's information dominance, flexibility, and mobility. A TF achieves surprise by--

- Gaining and maintaining information dominance by conducting thorough ISR and counterreconnaissance efforts.
- Striking the enemy from an unexpected direction at an unexpected time through the unique combination of rapid mounted movement and the ability of units to cross any type of terrain.

- Quickly changing the tempo of the operations.
- Being unpredictable.

b. **Concentration**. A force achieves concentration by massing the effects of combat power. Superior timing, precision maneuvers, and speed, facilitated by shared information dominance, allows the TF commander to mass the effects of his forces when and where appropriate and to shift from one objective or direction to another quickly. Because the commander has the advantage in information being received, he has a better understanding of the effects of his action ("seeing" success or the need to continue an attack) and can apply available combat power more efficiently and focus his main effort more effectively. Once it gains success, the TF can quickly disperse, if needed, to avoid enemy counteractions, again under control enabled by understanding. A TF achieves concentration through--

- Careful planning and coordination based on a thorough terrain and enemy analysis plus accurate, timely reconnaissance.
- Designation of a main effort and allocation of resources to support it.
- Continuous information flow.
- Positioning of units that allows them to mass effects.

c. **Tempo**. Tempo is the ability to adjust the rate of operations relative to battle circumstances and relative to the enemy's capability to sense and react. It is the controlled rate of military action. While a rapid tempo is often preferred, the tempo should be adjusted to ensure synchronization. The goal is to keep pressure on the enemy whether it is done quickly or slowly. Controlling and altering tempo promotes surprise, keeps the enemy off balance, denies the enemy freedom of action, and contributes to the security of the TF. The TF's advanced information systems and rapid mobility capabilities facilitate a rapid mounting tempo while permitting the synchronization necessary for a rapid execution tempo.

d. **Audacity**. Audacity is a simple plan of action, boldly executed. Audacity inspires soldiers to overcome adversity and danger. Audacity is a key component of any successful offensive action and increases the chance for surprise. It depends on the commander's ability to see opportunities for action, to decide in time to seize opportunities, and to accept the risks. Leaders must understand when and where to take risks, plan for them, and execute boldly. The sharing of combat information electronically between leaders at all echelons reduces the risk but does not eliminate the many uncertainties associated with battle. Digitization improves the commander's ability to make quick situational assessments, to conduct on-the-spot risk assessments, and to make bold decisions based on near-real-time information.

5-2. CONTACT CONTINUUM

Traditionally, the TF made contact with the scout platoon and lead company team to develop the situation while in contact with the enemy. The lead company team then fixed the enemy, allowing the remainder of the TF to maneuver against an assailable flank. This method was based on the TF's ability to overwhelm the enemy with greater available combat power. With the reduction of combat power in the TF and additional INFOSYS within the TF, a new method of making contact is required. This new contact continuum consists of understanding the situation and maneuvering to a position of advantage in order to make contact with the enemy on the TF's terms (Figure 5-1). Within this new

contact continuum, the TF can mass overwhelming combat power at the decisive point to achieve the TF purpose more efficiently and effectively.

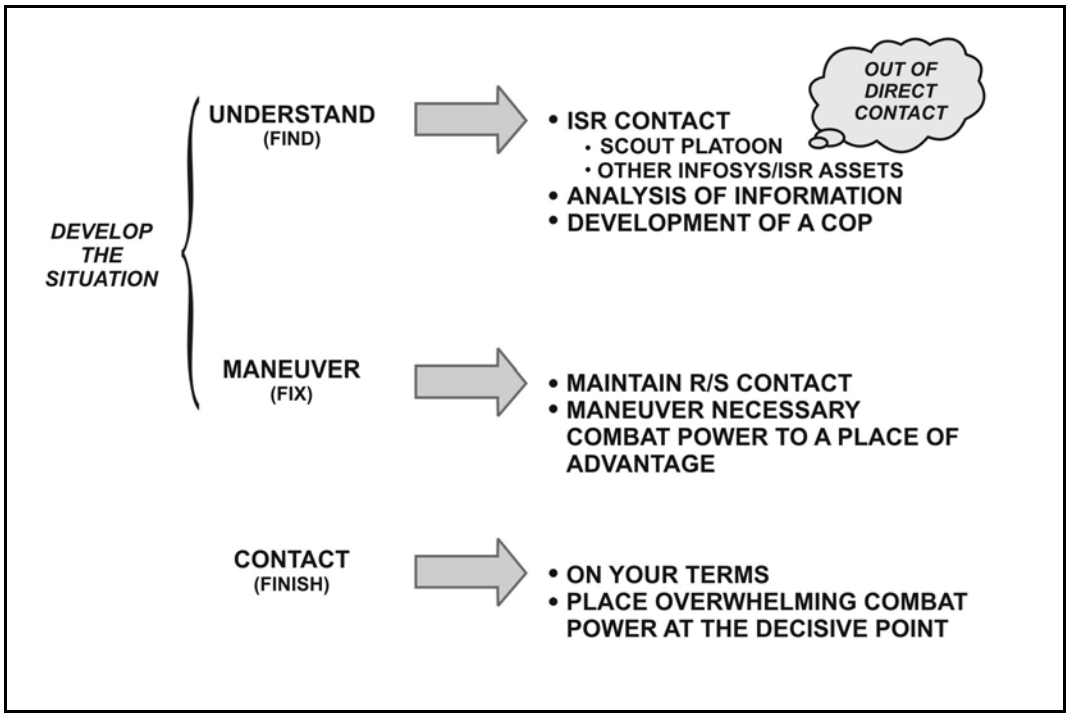


Figure 5-1. Contact continuum.

5-3. ORGANIZATION OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Commanders organize forces according to purpose by determining whether each unit's operation will be decisive, shaping, or sustaining. The purpose-based framework centers on decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations. Purpose unifies all elements of the battlefield organization by providing the common focus for all actions. However, forces act in time and space to accomplish a purpose. These decisions form the basis of the concept of operations. Alternatively, commanders may choose to use the 'decisive point,' 'main effort,' or 'supporting efforts' method to articulate his organization of forces if this better facilitates the commanders ability to visualize, describe, and direct actions, especially since battalion task forces operate at the tactical level of war. Commanders also synchronize operations in time and space. When circumstances require a spatial reference between friendly and enemy forces, commanders may describe them in terms of deep, close, and rear areas. These spatial categories are especially useful in combat operations that are generally contiguous, linear, and feature a clearly defined enemy force.

a. **Decisive Operations.** Decisive operations directly achieve the mission and intent of the higher headquarters. Decisive operations conclusively determine the outcome of battles and engagements. There is only one decisive operation for any major operation, battle, or engagement for any given echelon. The decisive operation may include multiple actions conducted simultaneously throughout the depth of the AO. Commanders weigh the decisive operation while economizing on the effort allocated to shaping operations.

(1) In the offense and defense, decisive operations normally focus on maneuver. Conversely, logistics may be decisive during the mobilization and deployment phases of an operation or in support operations, particularly if the mission is humanitarian in nature.

(2) A reserve is a portion of a body of troops that is kept to the rear or withheld from action at the beginning of an engagement but remains available for a decisive movement. Until committed, reserves shape through their placement within the AO while planning for and preparing to conduct operations. When committed, they usually either become the decisive operation or reinforce the decisive operation. Commanders can use reserves to influence circumstances or exploit opportunities. When commanders anticipate uncertainty, they hold a greater portion of the force in reserve, posturing the force to seize and maintain the initiative as a situation develops. Reserves deploy and reposition as necessary to ensure their protection, availability, and prompt reaction.

b. **Shaping Operations.** Shaping operations create and preserve the conditions for the success of the decisive operation. Shaping operations include lethal and nonlethal activities conducted throughout the AO. They support the decisive operation by affecting the enemy's capabilities and forces or influencing the opposing commander's decisions. Shaping operations use the full range of military power to neutralize or reduce enemy capabilities. They may occur simultaneously with, before, or after initiation of the decisive operation. They may involve any combination of forces and occur throughout the depth of the AO.

(1) Some shaping operations, especially those that occur simultaneously with the decisive operation, are economy-of-force actions. If the force available does not permit simultaneous decisive and shaping operations, the commander sequences shaping operations around the decisive operation. A shaping operation may become the decisive operation if circumstances or opportunity demand. In that case, commanders weigh the new decisive operations at the expense of other shaping operations. The concept of the operation clearly defines how shaping operations support the decisive operation.

(2) Security is an important shaping operation. Security enables the decisive operation of the next higher headquarters. Security protects the force and provides time for friendly forces to react to enemy or hostile activities. It also blinds the enemy's attempts to see friendly forces and protects friendly forces from enemy observation and fires.

c. **Sustaining Operations.** The purpose of sustaining operations is the generation and maintenance of combat power.

(1) Sustaining operations are operations at any echelon that enable shaping and decisive operations by providing CSS, rear area and base security; movement control; terrain management; and infrastructure development. Sustaining operations include the following elements.

(a) CSS generates and sustains combat power. While balancing the necessity of security, CSS provides essential capabilities, functions, activities, and tasks necessary to sustain all elements of the operating forces in-theater. CSS encompasses those activities at all levels of war that generate and maintain forces on the battlefield.

(b) Rear area and base security include measures taken by a military unit, an activity, or an installation to defend and protect itself against all acts that may impair its effectiveness. It has four components--intelligence, base and base cluster self-defense,

response force operations, and combined arms tactical combat force (TCF) operations (see FM 100-7).

(c) Movement control includes the planning, routing, scheduling, controlling, and security of the movement of personnel and materiel into, within, and out of the AO. Maintaining movement control, keeping LOC open, and obtaining host nation support are critical requirements in preserving freedom of movement throughout the AO.

(d) Terrain management includes the process of allocating terrain, designating assembly areas, and specifying locations for units and activities. The process includes grouping units together to form bases and designated base clusters as necessary.

(e) Infrastructure development applies to all fixed and permanent installations, fabrications, or facilities that support and control military forces. Infrastructure development focuses on facility security modifications and includes area damage control (ADC) and repairs.

(2) Sustaining operations are inseparable from decisive and shaping operations, although they are not by themselves decisive or shaping. Failure to sustain normally results in mission failure. Sustaining operations occur throughout the AO not just within the rear area. Sustaining operations determine how quickly forces reconstitute and how far forces can exploit success. At the tactical level, sustaining operations underwrite the tempo of the overall operation; they assure the ability to take advantage of any opportunity immediately.

d. **Main Effort.** In a TF, there is only one main attack which includes the main effort and may include one or more supporting efforts. All other elements of the TF support the main attack. In planning the scheme of maneuver, the main attack must have sufficient combat power and support to accomplish its mission. The main effort accomplishes the TF's purpose, normally at the decisive point. After designating the main effort, the commander ensures all available resources are focused on supporting it and places the bulk of the offensive capability at his disposal into it. To weight the main effort, the commander may--

- Assign the main attack to the company team(s) with the greatest combat power.
- Allocate additional combat platoons in task organization.
- Attach combat support elements in DS.
- Position overwatch or support by fire elements to support.
- Assign priority of fires (artillery, mortars, and CAS) and priority of targets.
- Coordinate adjacent unit or attack helicopter support by fire.
- Assign priority of CSS.
- Narrow the scope of the main effort's responsibility in terms of geographical area or specified tasks.

(1) Enemy actions, minor changes in the situation, or lack of success by other elements must not divert forces from the main effort. The commander commits the main effort at the decisive point where the unit's total combat power can be massed to achieve decisive results with respect to terrain, the enemy, and time in order to achieve the unit's purpose. Once committed, the unit may--

- Secure key and or decisive terrain.
- Seize key and or decisive terrain.
- Destroy designated enemy forces.

(2) If the situation changes so that the actions originally anticipated as decisive are no longer feasible or relevant, the commander may change the unit designated to conduct the main effort during the course of an operation. Rapidly shifting the main effort as changes in the situation occur is challenging. Time and distance factors determine which forces the commander uses if he shifts the main effort.

e. **Reserve**. The TF designates a reserve when the brigade has no reserve or an inadequate reserve or when faced with an uncertain situation that requires flexibility in the plan. The reserve provides additional combat power during critical points in the fight, the ability to exploit the success of the main effort, and a hedge against uncertainty. The reserve should be sized to mitigate risk and based on the level of detail known about the enemy. The TF's information dominance over the enemy allows the commander to capitalize on the capabilities of digitization to apportion his available troops to the tasks required to effect his concept of attack. The composition of the reserve is based on the firepower, mobility, and type of forces needed to meet its anticipated mission requirements based on the enemy. Solid intelligence can lead the commander to concentrate his committed units against a specific enemy weak point(s) and identify reserve requirements.

(1) The TF reserve can be as small as an infantry platoon. The commander and staff must look for opportunities to use other assets, such as fires and situational obstacles, to assist with the reserve mission. To generate larger ground maneuver reserves, the commander must redirect committed elements after they have accomplished their initial tasks or when the enemy's defeat frees them for other tasks.

(2) The speed and agility of the combat platoons allow them to be committed, withdrawn, redirected, and recommitted during the fight. The rotation of units into the reserve role requires the best possible information available. Moving a unit from one area (left to right or front to rear) requires everyone in the unit to know where he is, where the enemy is, and where other friendly units are. Additionally, the movement of ground forces over the distances expected in the expanded battlespace requires time. The time and distance relationship for both mounted and dismounted actions, especially under limited visibility conditions and rough terrain, is a key factor in determining which units the commander can realistically consider as a possible reserve force.

(3) The TF reserve follows the main attack at a distance sufficient to keep it from interfering with the movement of the lead company teams and to maintain its freedom of maneuver. The reserve maintains the flexibility to shift to a supporting attack if the main effort changes.

(4) The reserve commander must understand the commander's intent, especially the decision points and conditions for commitment of the reserve. The reserve commander must remain updated on the situation and possess the same combat operational picture as the TF commander.

f. **Follow and Support**. In exploitation and pursuit operations, the TF is normally employed by higher formations in a follow and support role.

(1) Follow and support is a task in which a committed force follows and supports the unit conducting the main attack. A follow and support task is assigned to a unit to prevent the unit conducting the main attack (usually the TF main effort) from having to commit its combat power away from its primary task. A follow and support force executes one or more of the following tasks:

- Destroy bypassed enemy forces.
- Block movement of enemy reinforcements.
- Secure routes or key terrain.
- Clear obstacles or reduce additional obstacle lanes.
- Guard or secure enemy prisoners, key areas, and installations.
- Recover friendly battle losses.
- Control refugees.
- Reinforce the main effort.

(2) When operating as a follow and support force, the TF's movement techniques are similar to those used in a movement to contact. The TF coordinates plans with the unit it follows. Both units exchange situation reports frequently to coordinate operations.

g. **Follow and Assume**. Follow and assume is a task in which a committed force follows another force, normally the main effort, and is prepared to assume the mission of the other force if that force is fixed, halted, or unable to continue. The follow and assume force maintains contact with the trail elements of the other force and monitors all combat information and intelligence. It can maintain this contact through digital tools or by physical contact. The COP should provide the same picture of the battle to the follow-on force as is available to the lead force.

(1) The follow and assume force is prepared to conduct a forward passage of lines but should attempt to pass around a flank of the lead force when assuming its mission. Additionally, the following force avoids becoming decisively engaged with enemy forces bypassed by the force it is following. The S2 must ensure that the following force is provided current information and disposition of the bypassed enemy forces as well as a current picture of the enemy forces the lead element faces and those it expects to face.

(2) Crucial actions to support the commitment of the follow and assume force include:

- Maintain current information on the enemy and friendly situation.
- Shift observers and reconnaissance assets as required.
- Develop graphic control measures to ensure a rapid passage of lines or passing on a flank.
- Ensure terrain is allocated for rapid movement while maintaining force protection.
- Be prepared for the shift in priority of CS and CSS support. Reposition assets and re-task-organize as required.
- Activate emergency resupply operations as necessary.
- Establish direct fire control measures and FSCMs such as restrictive fire lines (RFLs).

Section II. FORMS OF MANEUVER

The TF uses the five basic forms of maneuver during an attack: envelopment, turning movement, infiltration, penetration, and frontal attack. The commander selects a form of maneuver as a foundation upon which to build a COA.

5-4. ENVELOPMENT

Envelopment is normally the preferred form of maneuver. It seeks to apply strength against weakness. Envelopment avoids the enemy’s front where forces are most

protected, attention is focused, and fires are most easily concentrated. The attacker attempts to fix the defender with supporting attacks while he maneuvers the main attack around the enemy's defenses to strike at the flanks, rear, or both. The TF's intelligence capabilities enable it to strike from an unexpected direction or against an enemy weakness, forcing the enemy to fight along unprepared, lightly defended, or undefended avenues of approach. The TF fixes the enemy force with a small force then attacks with the preponderance of available combat power against the enemy force's flank or rear.

a. Envelopments may be conducted against a stationary or moving enemy force. Sometimes the enemy exposes his flank by his own forward movement, unaware of his opponent's location. In a fluid battle, the combination of air and indirect fires may isolate the enemy on unfavorable terrain and establish conditions for maneuver against an assailable flank or rear. The attacker needs to be agile enough to concentrate his forces and mass his combat power before the enemy can reorient his defense (Figure 5-2).

b. When the TF conducts envelopment, one or more company teams make supporting attacks to fix the enemy while other company teams of the TF maneuver against the enemy's flank or rear. The supporting attack must have sufficient combat power to keep the enemy engaged while the enveloping force maneuvers to close with the enemy.

c. Variations of the envelopment include the double envelopment and encirclement.

(1) ***Double Envelopment.*** The attacker seeks to pass at the same time around both flanks of the enemy. This type of envelopment requires two assailable flanks, precise coordination, sufficient combat power, and detailed timing. A TF seldom attempts the double envelopment on its own. The potential for fratricide increases significantly with this form of envelopment.

(2) ***Encirclement.*** Encirclement occurs when the defender has lost all ground routes of evacuation and reinforcement. TF fires must be synchronized to complete the destruction of the encircled force. Forces must be positioned to block or interdict the enemy's attempt to break through the encirclement. Encirclements are likely to be made during an exploitation or pursuit. TFs participate in encirclements as part of a larger force.

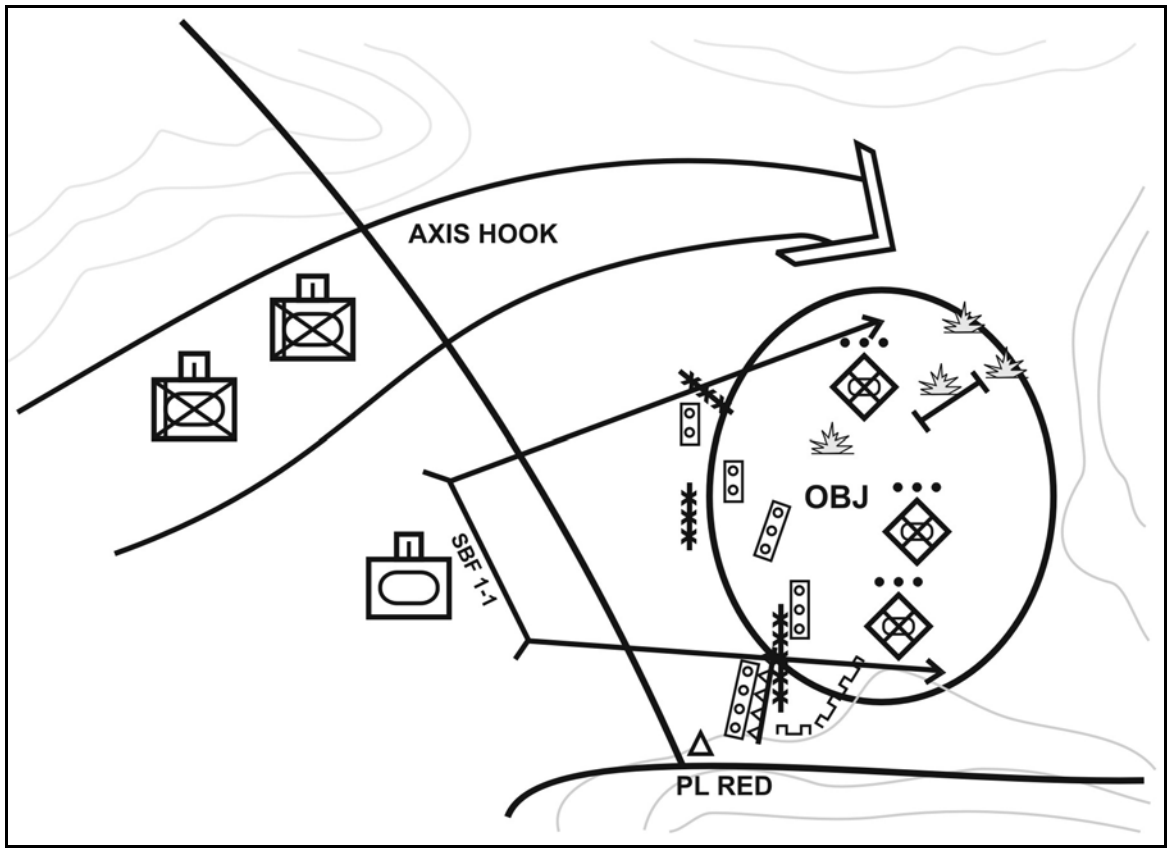

AXIS HOOK
OBJ
SBF 1-1
PL RED

Figure 5-2. Envelopment.

5-5. PENETRATION

In a penetration, the attacker concentrates forces to strike at an enemy weak point and break through the position to rupture the defense and break up its continuity. The attacker then uses the gap created to pass forces through to defeat the enemy through attacks into his flanks and rear. A successful penetration depends on the attacker's ability to suppress enemy weapons systems, to concentrate forces to overwhelm the defender at the point of attack, and to pass sufficient forces through the gap to defeat the enemy quickly. A penetration is normally attempted when enemy flanks are unassailable or when conditions permit neither envelopment nor a turning movement such as an attack against the enemy's main defensive belt (Figure 5-3, page 5-10).

a. **Concentration.** The penetration of an enemy position requires a concentration of combat power to permit continued momentum of the attack. The attack should move rapidly to destroy the continuity of the defense since, if it is slowed or delayed, the enemy will be afforded time to react. If the attacker does not make the penetration sharply and secure objectives promptly, the penetration is likely to resemble a frontal attack. This may result in high casualties and permit the enemy to fall back intact, thus avoiding destruction.

b. **Steps.** A penetration is conducted in the following three steps:

(1) ***Step 1: Penetrating the Main Line of Resistance.*** A mechanized heavy company team can execute the initial penetration. It breaches the enemy's obstacles using mineplows, mine clearing line charges (MICLICs), or dismounted infantry squads, depending on the extent and composition of the obstacles.

(2) ***Step 2: Widening the Gap to Secure the Flanks.*** The TF seizes enemy positions behind the obstacles and widens the shoulders of the penetration to allow assaulting forces room to attack deep objectives.

(3) ***Step 3: Seizing the Objective and Subsequent Exploitation.*** Exploitation of the penetration is made as company teams complete the destruction of the enemy and attack to secure deeper objectives. Objectives for the assaulting force are deep enough to allow an envelopment of the rest of the enemy position and should facilitate attack by fire against second echelon enemy positions and enemy counterattack routes.

c. **Planning Considerations.** To allow a penetration, the terrain must facilitate the maneuver of the penetrating force. The concentration of the TF is planned to penetrate the defense where the continuity of the enemy's defense has been interrupted, such as gaps in obstacles and minefields or areas not covered by fire. If METT-TC analysis identifies multiple weaknesses in the enemy's position, multiple penetrations should be considered. When essential to the accomplishment of the mission, intermediate objectives should be planned for the attack.

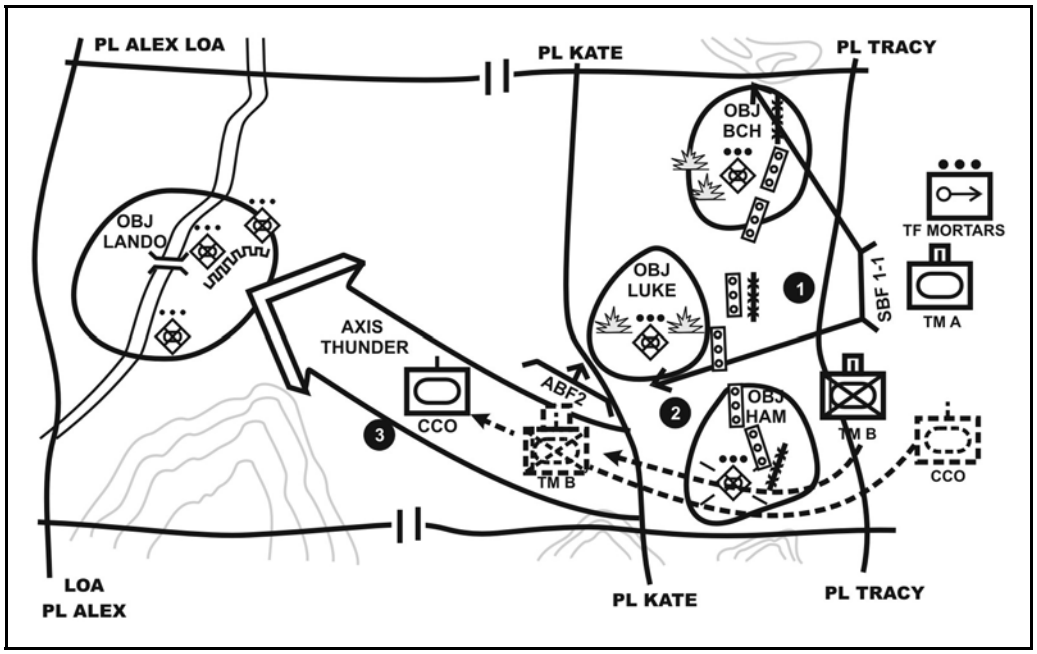


Figure 5-3. Penetration.

5-6. TURNING MOVEMENT

In a turning movement (Figure 5-4), the unit passes around and avoids the enemy's main force, then secures an objective that causes the enemy to move out of its current position or divert forces to meet the threat. The TF conducts a turning movement as part of a larger unit's operation. This movement allows the unit, brigade or higher, to fight the repositioning enemy forces on terms and conditions that are favorable. The TF can also conduct a turning movement with subordinate company teams.

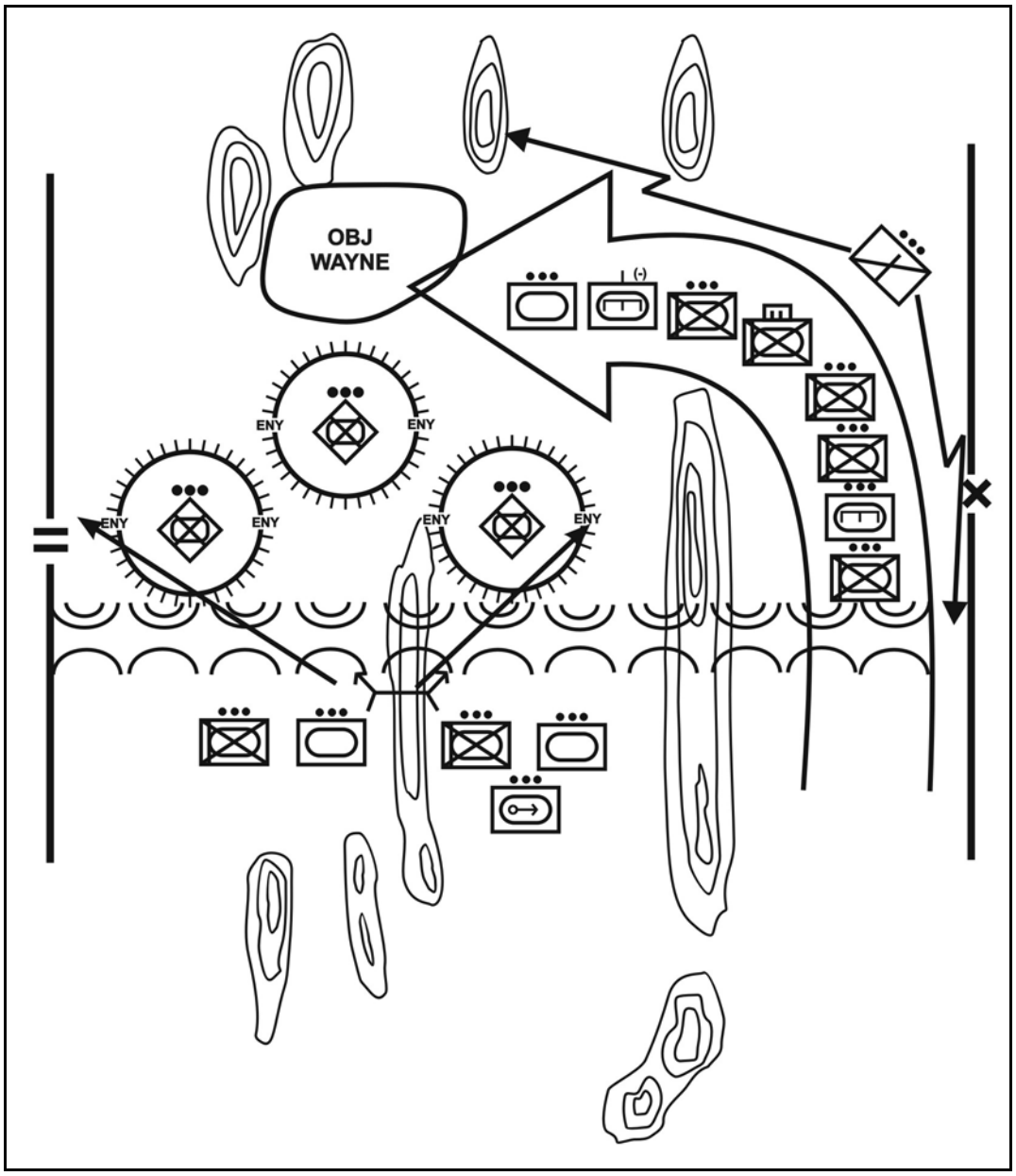


Figure 5-4. Turning movement.

5-7. INFILTRATION

Infiltration (Figure 5-5, page 5-12) is a form of maneuver in which combat elements conduct undetected movement (mounted or dismounted) through or into an area occupied by enemy forces to occupy a position of advantage in the enemy's rear. The commander uses infiltration to--

- Attack lightly defended positions or stronger positions from the flank and rear.
- Secure key terrain in support of the main effort.
- Disrupt enemy rear operations.
- Relocate the TF by moving to battle positions around an engagement area.

- Reposition to attack vital facilities or enemy forces from the flank or rear.
- Harass and disrupt the enemy's CSS.

a. **Planning Considerations.** The commander avoids alerting the enemy of his intentions by positioning maneuver and artillery units and the effects of fires in support of the infiltration. Infiltration is normally used in conjunction with some other form of maneuver. An infiltration should be planned during limited visibility through areas the enemy does not occupy or cover by surveillance and fire. Planning should incorporate infiltration lanes, rally points along the route or axis, and contact points. Single or multiple infiltration lanes can be planned.

(1) ***Single Infiltration Lane***. A single infiltration lane--

- Facilitates navigation, control, and reassembly of the TF.
- Is less susceptible to detection.
- Reduces the area for which detailed intelligence is required.
- Takes longer to move the force through enemy positions.

(2) ***Multiple Infiltration Lanes***. Multiple infiltration lanes--

- Reduce the possibility of compromising the entire TF.
- Facilitate expeditious movement.
- Are more difficult to control.

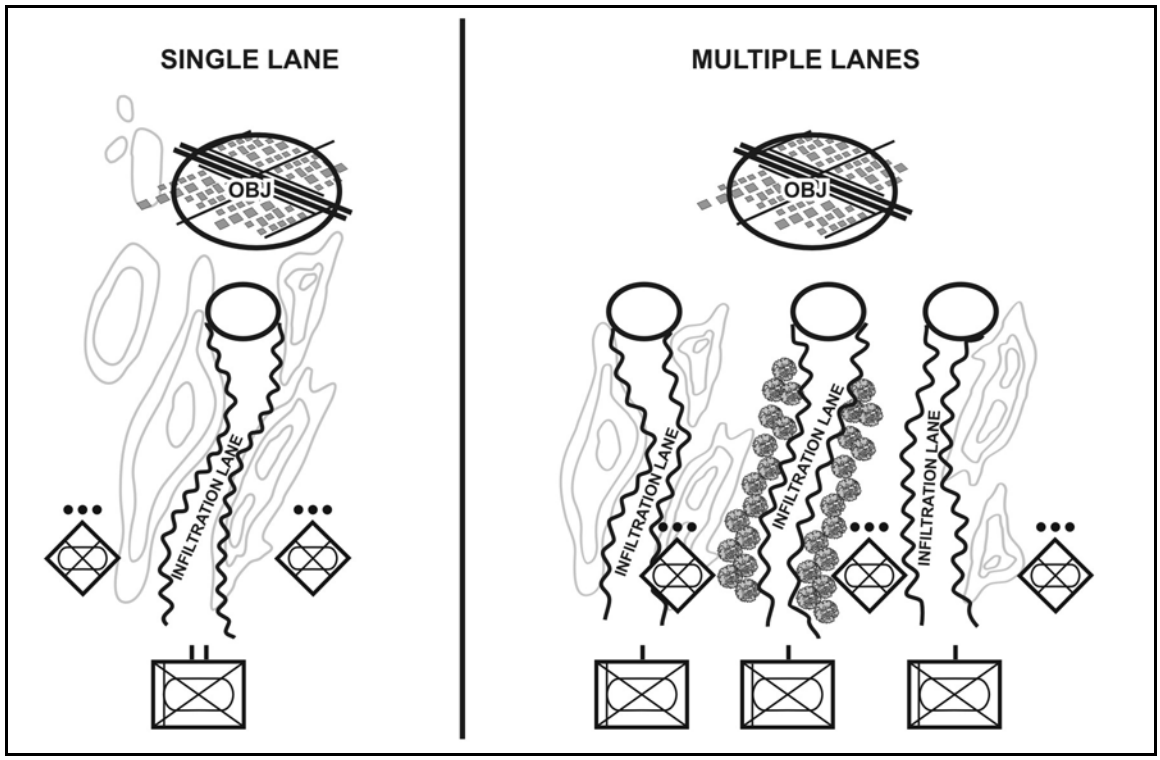


Figure 5-5. Infiltration.

b. **Vehicle Laager.** The task force has the ability to laager its vehicles and proceed on foot to areas that place the enemy at a disadvantage. Upon completion of the mission, the vehicles can be brought forward and the TF will be positioned to conduct follow-on operations. The commander avoids alerting the enemy of his intentions by positioning

maneuver and artillery units and the effects of fires in support of the infiltration. Infiltration is normally used in conjunction with some other form of maneuver.

5-8. FRONTAL ATTACK

The frontal attack is the least desirable form of maneuver and is often the most costly since it exposes the majority of the attack force to the concentrated fires of the defenders. It can be used where speed and simplicity are essential to maintain tempo and the initiative. The TF may conduct a frontal attack (Figure 5-6) against a stationary or moving enemy force. Unless frontal attacks are executed with overwhelming speed and strength against a weaker enemy, they are seldom decisive. The TF attacks the enemy across a wide front and along the most direct approaches. It uses a frontal attack to overrun and destroy a weakened enemy force or fix an enemy force. Frontal attacks are used when commanders possess overwhelming combat power and the enemy is at a clear disadvantage or when fixing the enemy over a wide front is the desired effect and a decisive defeat in that area is not expected. The frontal attack may be appropriate--

- In an attack or meeting engagement where speed and simplicity are paramount to maintaining battle tempo and, ultimately, the initiative.
- In a supporting attack to fix an enemy force.

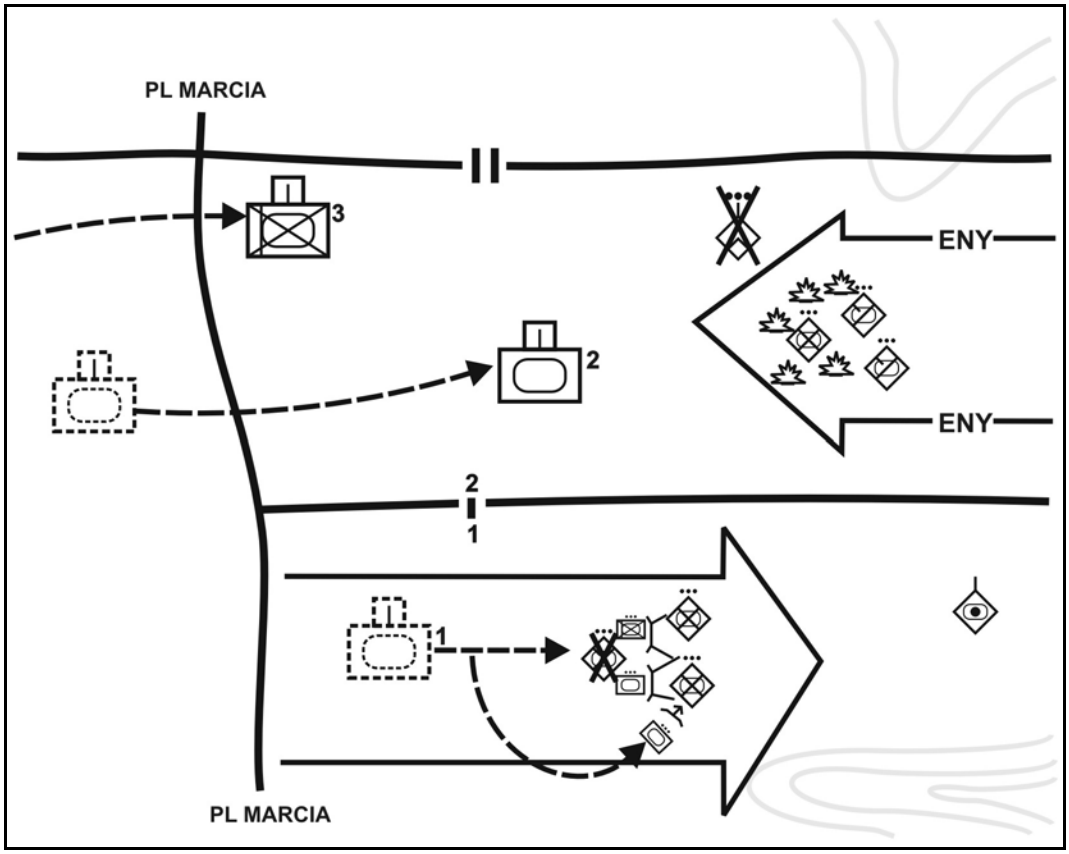


Figure 5-6. Frontal attack against a moving enemy.

5-9. SEQUENCE OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The commander and staff consider both preparation and execution as they plan an offensive mission.

a. **Preparation**. The TF conducts extensive reconnaissance of the objective to support the commander's decisions of how to employ his combat power against the enemy. He normally does not make final decisions as to the exact conduct of the operation until ISR operations develop the enemy situation. The commander and staff direct and supervise mission preparations to prepare the TF for the battle. The TF employs security forces to protect and conceal attack preparations from the enemy. Preparation time is also used to conduct precombat checks and inspections, rehearsals at all levels, and CSS activities.

b. **Execution**. Execution generally consists of the following four sequential events:

- Movement to the line of departure.
- Approach to the objective.
- Actions on the objective.
- Consolidation and reorganization.

The TF then prepares for follow-on missions as directed by higher headquarters.

(1) ***Movement to the Line of Departure***. When attacking from positions not in contact, TFs often stage in rear assembly areas, road march to attack positions behind friendly units in contact with the enemy, conduct passage of lines, and begin the attack. (See Chapter 12, Section VII [Tactical Road Marches] and Section VIII [Assembly Area Operations]). When attacking from positions in direct contact, the line of departure is the same as the line of contact.

(2) ***Approach to the Objective***. The commander and staff plan the approach to the objective to ensure security, speed, and flexibility. They select routes, techniques, formations, and methods (air, mounted, dismounted) that best support actions on the objective. All leaders must recognize this portion of the battle as a fight, not a movement. The TF may have to fight through enemy combat forces, obstacles, artillery strikes, security elements, possible spoiling attacks, and other combat multipliers to reach the objective. The commander employs techniques that avoid the enemy's strength when possible and conceal the TF's true intentions. He tries to deceive the enemy as to the location of the main effort, uses surprise to take advantage of his initiative in determining the time and place of his attack, and uses indirect approaches when available to strike the enemy from a flank or the rear.

(3) ***Actions on the Objective***. During an offensive operation, the TF's objective may be terrain- or force-oriented. Terrain-oriented objectives usually require the TF to seize or secure a designated area. However, to gain a terrain-oriented objective often requires fighting through enemy forces. If the objective is an enemy force, an objective area may be assigned for orientation, but the TF's effort is focused on the enemy's actual location. The enemy may be a stationary or moving force. Actions on the objective start when the TF begins echeloning its fires onto the objective. This action usually occurs with preparatory fires while the TF is still approaching the objective.

(4) ***Consolidation and Reorganization***. The TF reorganizes and consolidates as required by the situation and mission. The consolidation and reorganization plan needs to be as detailed as the assault plan.

(a) *Consolidation*. Consolidation consists of actions taken to secure and strengthen the objective and defend against enemy counterattack. The unit providing the supporting effort during the assault may or may not join the assault force on the objective. Planning considerations should include unit locations, sectors of fire, forces oriented on enemy counterattack routes, and provisions to facilitate transition to follow-on operations.

(b) *Reorganization*. Normally conducted concurrently with consolidation, reorganization occurs as necessary to prepare the unit for follow-on operations. Detailed planning provides the task force a plan for evacuating and recovering casualties, recovering damaged equipment, providing for prisoners of war, and integrating replacement personnel.

(5) ***Follow-On Missions***. The TF executes follow-on missions as directed by the higher commander. The most likely mission is to continue the attack. Other missions may include supporting a passage of lines for a follow-on force, defending, or participating in an exploitation or pursuit. The TF develops plans for follow-on missions based on the higher headquarters' plan, the higher commander's intent, and the anticipated situation.

5-10. MOVEMENT TECHNIQUES AND FORMATIONS

The selection of movement techniques and attack formations for the TF depends on the factors of METT-TC.

a. **Movement Techniques**. The movement techniques used are traveling, traveling overwatch, and bounding overwatch. The TF does not usually move as a unit using one movement technique. However, when moving as a unit along a single avenue, the TF commander designates the movement technique to be used by the lead unit(s) based on the likelihood of enemy contact. For example, the TF may be moving to contact in column formation while the lead company team may be in a wedge formation using traveling overwatch. Movement techniques are used when not in contact with the enemy; they end upon encountering any situation that requires an active or passive response to the enemy under the seven forms of contact (visual, physical, indirect, obstacles, aircraft, NBC conditions, or electronic warfare) when the unit begins its actions on contact and the overwatching force begins its suppressive fires (maneuver). The TF should try to make enemy contact with the smallest possible force. This technique allows the majority of the TF the freedom to maneuver against the enemy force.

b. **Formations**. The TF may move in any one of these basic formations: column, wedge, vee, echelon, and line. The TF may use more than one formation in a given movement, especially if the terrain changes during the movement. For example, the TF commander may elect to use the column formation during a passage of lines and then change to another formation, such as a wedge. Other factors, such as the distance of the move or enemy dispositions, may also prompt the commander to use more than one formation. Distances between units depend on the factors of METT-TC.

(1) ***Column Formation***. The TF moves in column formation (Figure 5-7, page 5-16) when early contact is not expected and the objective is far away. The TF's lead element normally uses traveling overwatch while the following units travel. The column formation--

- Facilitates speed of movement, ease of control, and usefulness in close terrain.
- Provides for quick transition to other formations.

- Requires flank security.
- Provides the majority of firepower to flanks.

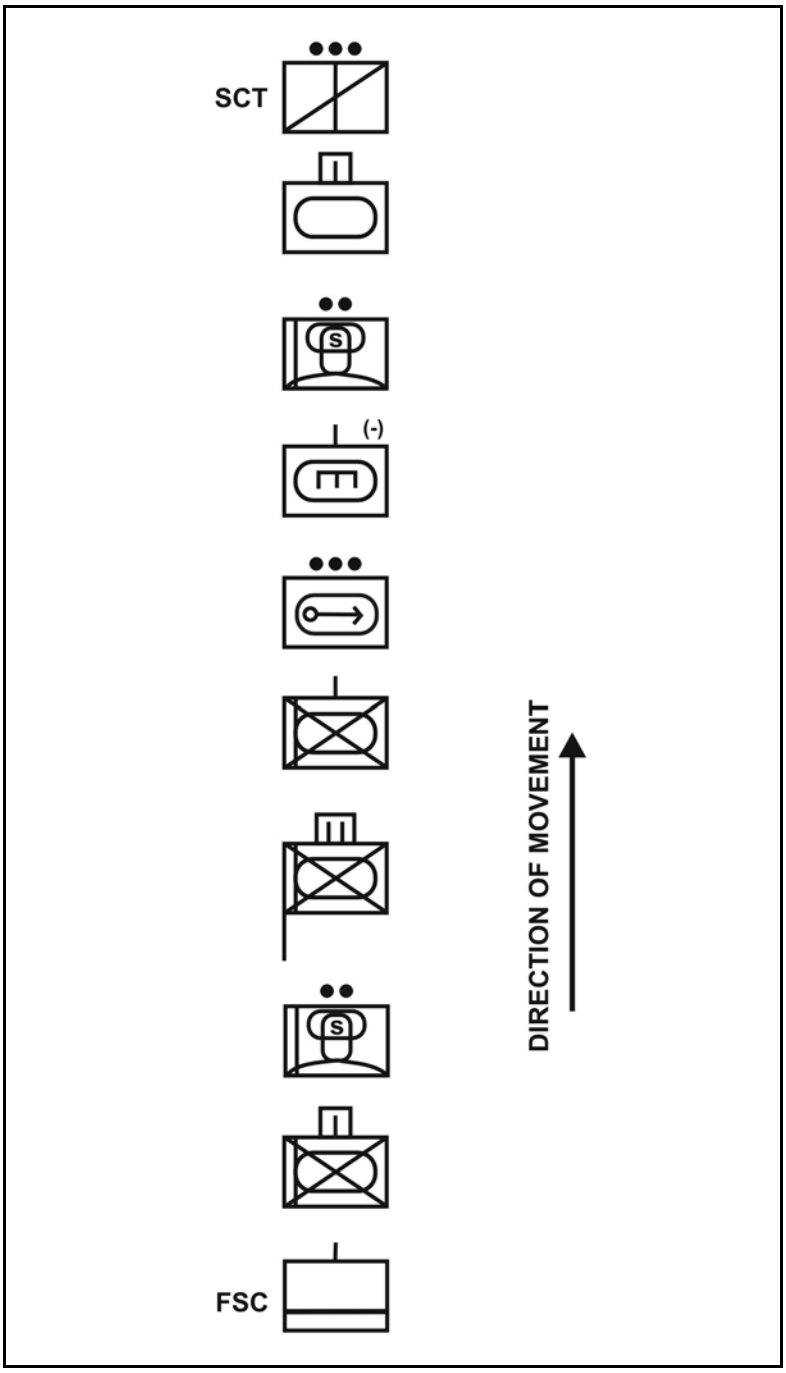


Figure 5-7. TF in column formation.

(2) ***Wedge Formation***. The wedge formation (Figure 5-8) postures the TF for enemy contact on its front and flanks. The force uses the wedge when enemy contact is possible or expected but the location and disposition of the enemy is vague. When not expecting enemy contact, it may use the wedge to cross open terrain rapidly. The wedge formation--

- Facilitates control and transition to the assault.
- Provides for maximum firepower forward and good firepower to the flanks.
- Requires sufficient space to disperse laterally and in depth.

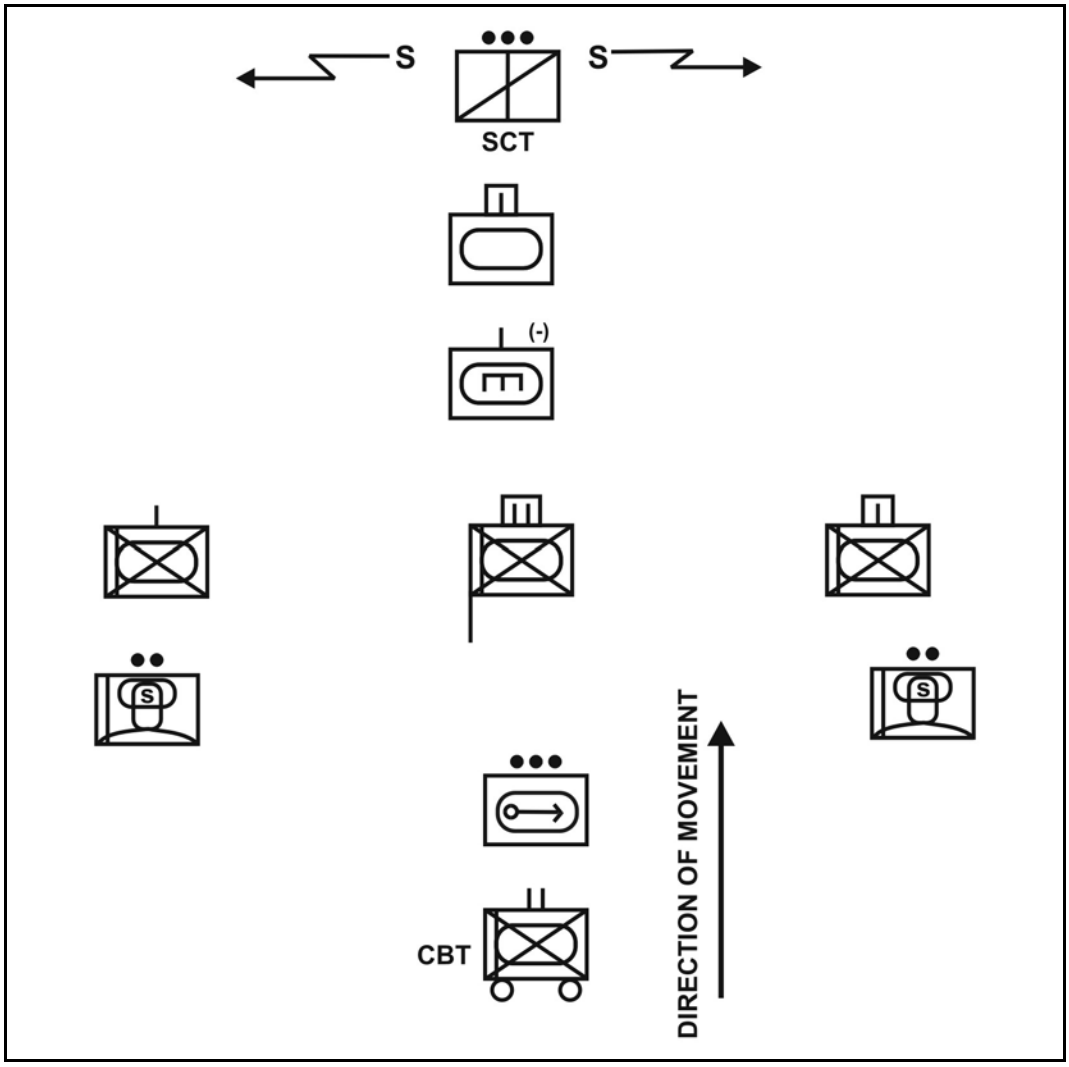


Figure 5-8. TF in wedge formation.

(3) ***Vee Formation***. The vee formation (Figure 5-9, page 5-18) postures the TF with two company teams abreast and one trailing. This arrangement is most suitable to advance against an enemy known to be to the front of the TF. The TF may use the vee when enemy contact is expected and the location and disposition of the enemy is known. The vee formation--

- Is hard to orient; control is more difficult in close or wooded terrain.
- Requires the TF to rely more on FBCB2 for control.
- Provides for good firepower forward and to the flanks.

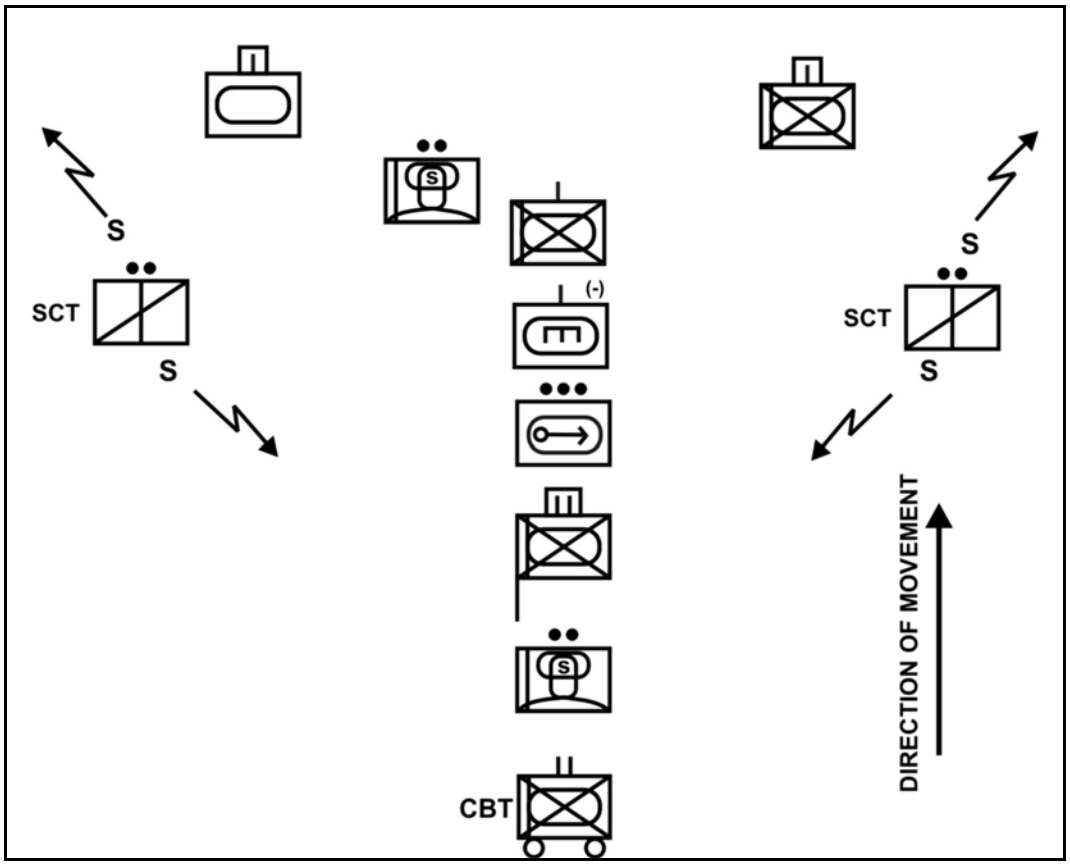


Figure 5-9. Task force in vee formation.

(4) ***Echelon Formation***. The echelon formation (Figure 5-10) arranges the TF with the company teams in column formation in the direction of the echelon (right or left). The TF commonly uses the echelon when providing security to a larger moving force. The echelon formation--

- Provides for firepower forward and in the direction of the echelon.
- Facilitates control in open areas but makes it more difficult in heavily wooded areas.

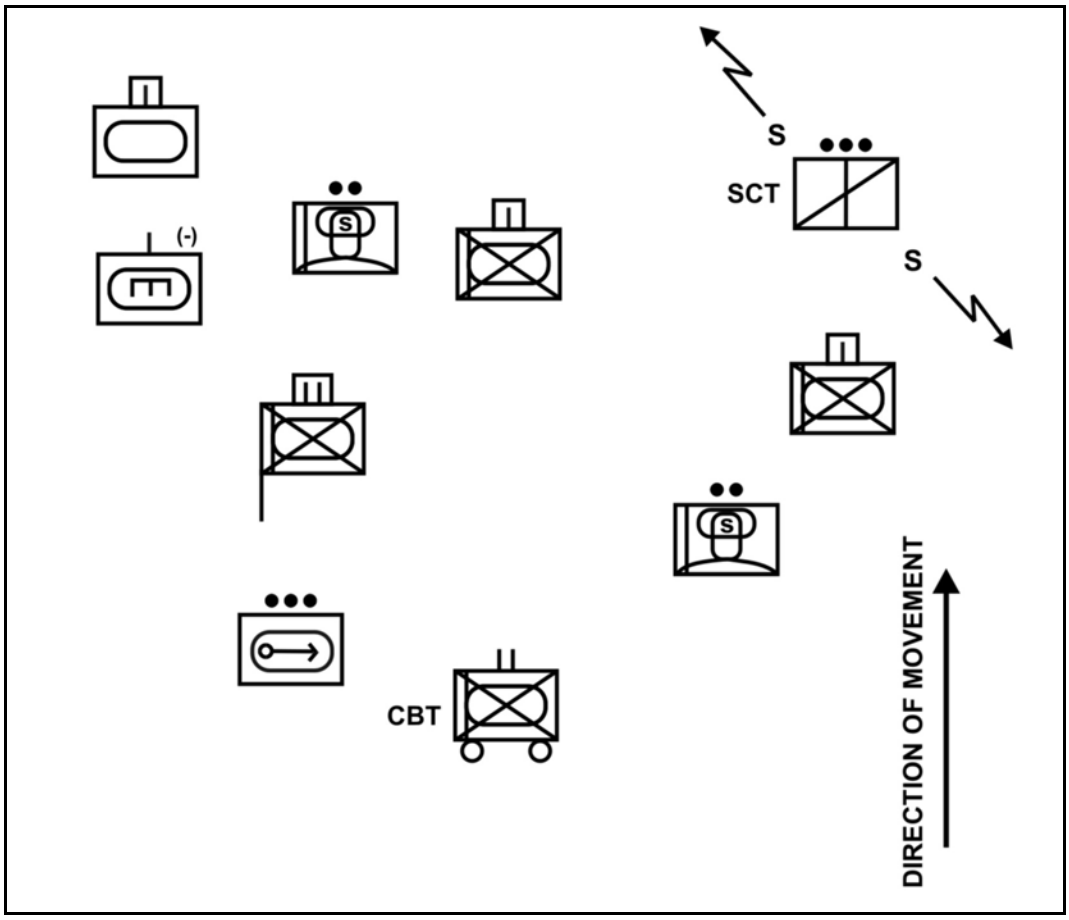


Figure 5-10. Task force in echelon right formation.

(5) ***Line Formation***. The line formation (Figure 5-11, page 5-20) postures the TF with company teams on-line and abreast of one another. Since it does not dispose company teams in depth, the line formation provides less flexibility of maneuver than other formations. The TF uses the line in an assault when it requires continuous movement with maximum firepower to the front.

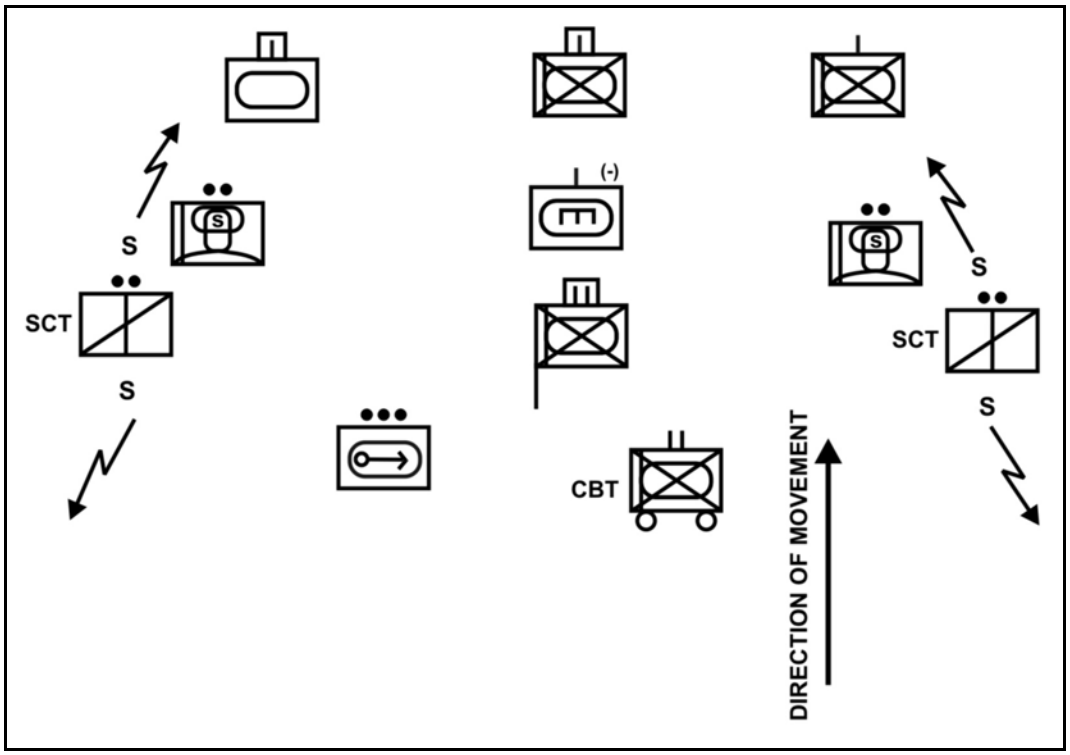


Figure 5-11. Task force in line formation.

Section III. TYPES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

At the battalion level, the offense takes the form of either a deliberate or a hasty operation, such as a movement to contact, attack, exploitation, or pursuit, across the full spectrum of conflict.

- Hasty Operations. The battalion conducts a hasty offensive operation after a successful defense or as part of a defense; as a result of a movement to contact, a meeting engagement, or a chance contact during a movement; or in a situation where the unit has the opportunity to attack vulnerable enemy forces.
- Deliberate Operations. A deliberate offensive operation is a fully synchronized operation that employs all available assets against the enemy's defense in accordance with (IAW) the ROE. Deliberate operations are characterized by detailed planning based on available information, thorough reconnaissance, preparation, and rehearsals.

The battalion may also be given the mission to conduct special-purpose attacks such as a raid, demonstration, spoiling attack, or counterattack. Attacks, exploitations, and pursuits may be conducted sequentially or simultaneously throughout the AO.

5-11. MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

The TF conducts movement to contact when the tactical situation is not clear or when the enemy has broken contact. Its purpose is to gain or reestablish contact with the enemy. TFs conduct movement to contact independently or as part of a larger force. The TF is normally given a movement to contact mission as the lead element of a brigade attack or as a counterattack element of a brigade or division (Figure 5-12). A properly executed

movement to contact develops the combat situation and maintains the commander's freedom of action after making contact. This flexibility is essential in maintaining the initiative. The movement to contact terminates with the occupation of an assigned objective or when enemy resistance requires the TF to deploy and conduct an attack to continue forward movement. The superior intelligence and acquisition capabilities available to the brigade and TF are likely to make movements to contact less common and change the nature of the meeting engagements that normally end a movement to contact. However, depending on the available intelligence assets, the effectiveness of the collection plan, and the enemy's success in masking his dispositions, the TF may still need to conduct a movement to contact. An exploitation or pursuit by the TF's parent brigade is likely to require a movement to contact by the TF, at least initially. A TF given a movement to contact mission is assigned an AO or an axis of advance and an objective at a depth to ensure contact with the enemy. The TF conducts movement to contact in a manner that allows it to maneuver to develop the situation fully, to maintain freedom of action, and, if possible, to defeat the enemy once contact is made.

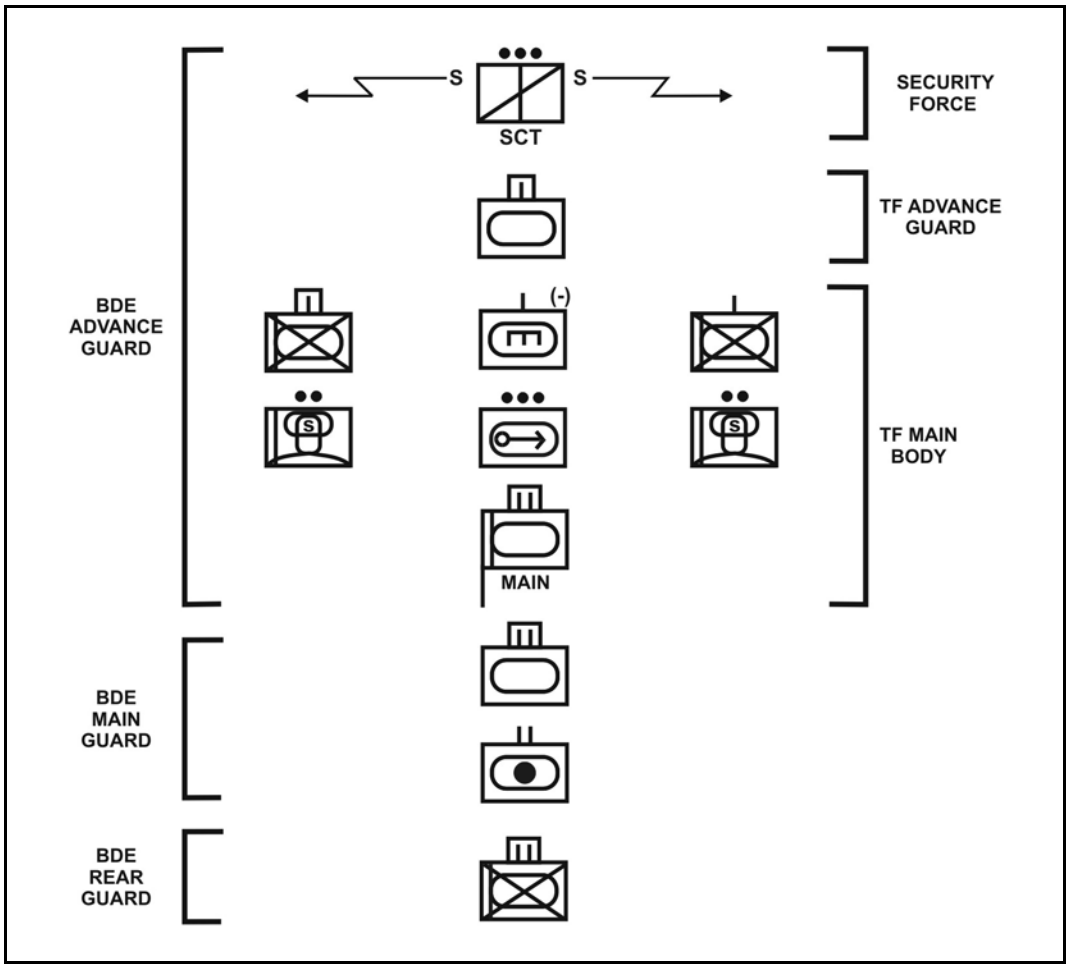


Figure 5-12. Task force movement to contact as part of a brigade.

5-12. APPROACH MARCH TECHNIQUE IN A MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

The TF normally organizes into a security force, an advanced guard, the main body, and flank and rear guards (Figure 5-13).

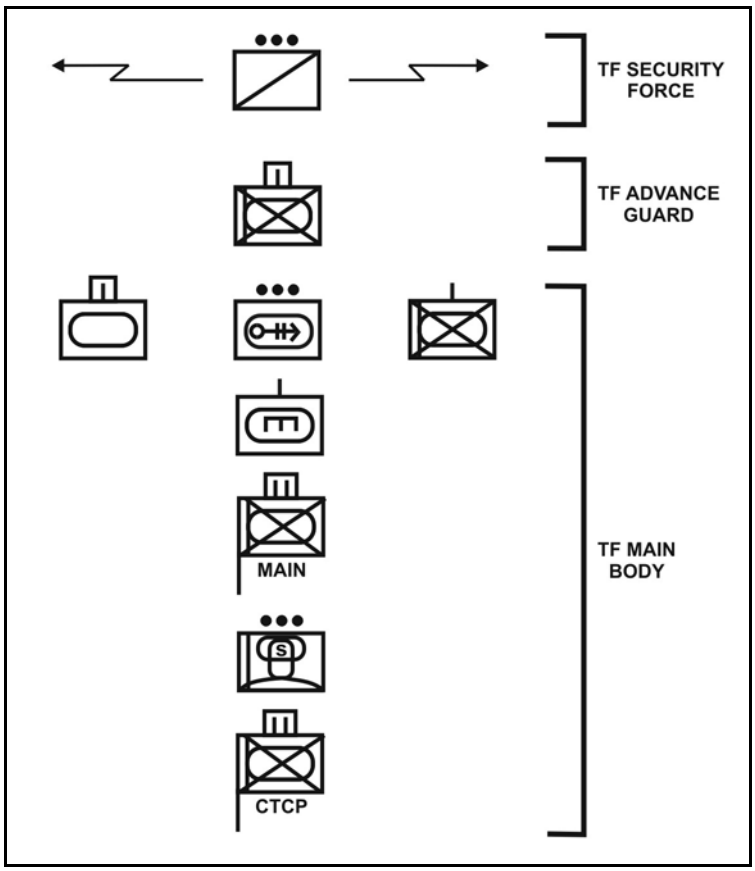


Figure 5-13. Task force movement to contact

a. **Security Forces**. The security force for the TF is normally the scout platoon. Engineers and forward observers (FOs) are attached to the security force as necessary. The security force normally has initial priority of indirect fires. The mission of the security force is to determine the size, activity, location, and depth of the enemy force. Other tasks include--

- Reconnaissance of routes, bridges, and roads.
- Reconnaissance of obstacles and restrictive terrain.
- Surveillance of NAIs.

(1) The security force must cover the frontage of the TF axis of advance. The TF avoids decisive engagement but, once it finds the enemy, it must keep him under surveillance and report his activity.

(2) The security force must be far enough ahead of the advance guard to provide adequate warning and sufficient space for them to maneuver. However, the security force must not be so far ahead that the advance guard cannot rapidly assist it in disengaging from the enemy should that become necessary. The advance guard keys its movement on the movement of the security force.

(3) The security force must be able to receive the latest information available from the brigade reconnaissance troop as well as information available from the brigade analysis control team (ACT) and other battlefield surveillance assets. With this information, the security force can confirm intelligence provided by these assets and greatly reduce the risks and unknowns normally associated with a movement to contact mission. This information is also available to the TF elements.

b. **Advance Guard**. The advance guard for a TF is usually a company team. Its composition depends on the factors of METT-TC. In open terrain, it may move mounted; in restricted, close, complex, or urban terrain, dismounted movement with vehicles in the overwatch is a better choice. The engineers follow or are attached to the lead elements. The two lead company teams are task-organized accordingly when a TF moves in parallel columns.

(1) The advance guard operates forward of the main body to provide security for the main body and ensure its uninterrupted advance. It protects the main body from surprise attack and develops the situation to protect the deployment of the main body when it is committed to action. The advance guard does this by rapidly developing the situation upon encountering the enemy's lead elements; destroying reconnaissance, ambushes, or delaying enemy forces; and marking bypasses for or reducing obstacles. The advance guard--

- Maintains combat information of the entire TF, especially the security force.
- Reports enemy contact to the TF commander.
- Collects and reports all information about the enemy.
- Selects tentative fighting positions for following TF units.
- Attempts to penetrate enemy security elements and reach or identify the enemy main force.
- Destroys or repels all enemy reconnaissance forces.
- Prevents enemy ground forces from engaging the main body with direct fires.
- Locates, bypasses, or breaches obstacles along the main body's axis of advance.
- Executes tactical tasks, such as fix, seize, or block, against enemy forces to develop the situation for the main body.
- Ensures that all pertinent information is passed to the rest of the TF via FBCB2 and FM voice.

(2) Until the main body is committed, the advance guard is the TF commander's main effort. Priority of fires shifts to the main body once committed.

(3) In planning the movement to contact, each contingency operation should revolve around the actions of the advance guard. The lead elements must be prepared to execute battle drills, especially those involving obstacle reduction and actions on contact.

c. **Main Body**. The main body keys its movement to the advance guard. It maintains information of the advance guard's activities via FM cross talk or its digital tools, primarily FBCB2 (when equipped). This digital capability allows the main body to key its movement on the advance guard while utilizing terrain and distance for force protection. The main body, remaining attuned to the advanced guard's situation, provides responsive support when the advance guard is committed.

(1) The main body contains the bulk of the TF's combat elements and is arrayed to achieve all-round security. The combat elements of the main body are prepared to deploy

and attack rapidly, giving them the flexibility to maneuver rapidly to a decisive point on the battlefield to destroy the enemy.

(2) The use of standard formations and battle drills allows the TF commander, based on the information available to him through ABCS, to shift combat power rapidly on the battlefield. Company teams employ the appropriate movement techniques within the TF formation. Company team commanders, based on their knowledge of the TF's situation, anticipate the TF commander's decisions for commitment of the main body and plan accordingly.

d. **Flank and Rear Security**. To provide flank security, platoon-size elements from one or more of the company teams in the main body provide a flank guard under company team control. These elements remain at a distance from the main body, which allows the TF time and space to maneuver to either flank. Flank security elements also operate far enough out to prevent the enemy from placing direct or observed indirect fires on the main body. Indirect fires are planned on major flank approaches to enhance security. One platoon pulled from the main body may provide security, but combat forces are not normally available to perform this mission. The TF attains rear security by rapid forward movement. This rapid movement forward gives the enemy less time to react or reposition forces to attack the TF.

5-13. INTEGRATION OF CS AND CSS ELEMENTS

The task force commander determines how to integrate and maximize the employment of his additional combat enablers while conducting MTC.

a. **Field Artillery**. Priority targets and FASCAM are allocated to the reconnaissance and security force and the advance guard. The brigade provides DS field artillery. The brigade positions field artillery units to provide continuous indirect fires for the moving TF. Given the brigade's emphasis on proactive counterfires and the likelihood for operating in close terrain, the TF must rely on its organic mortars.

b. **Mortars**. The TF mortars may be placed under the operational control of the advance guard, based on METT-TC, in order to provide responsive fires and smoke to support initial actions on contact.

c. **Air Force**. Close air support, if available, interdicts enemy counterattack forces or destroys defensive positions.

d. **Air Defense Artillery**. ADA assets generally provide area coverage for the TF and cover movement through restricted areas. However, some ADA assets may provide direct support for the advance guard. Regardless of the command relationship, ADA elements operate well forward on the battlefield.

e. **Engineers**. Priority of engineer support is to mobility. Elements of the supporting engineer unit may join the reconnaissance and security force to reconnoiter obstacles, based on METT-TC. Engineers may travel with the advance guard to assist in mobility of the advance guard and main body (Refer to Chapter 12 and FM 3-34.2 for detailed discussion of combined arms breaching operations). Situational obstacles are planned to support the security forces and the advance guard.

f. **Combat Service Support**. The object of CSS operations is to provide support as far forward as possible without disrupting operations. The priority is to move Class V forward and to evacuate casualties rearward. The FSB accomplishes its core functions through centralization of support, which provides the maneuver commander with

increased efficiency and effectiveness in the flow of support and supplies. Centralized support also allows the FSB commander to weight the battle logistically or surge as required. CSSCS and the near-real-time information provided by FBCB2 enhance centralization of support.

(1) In offensive operations, the FSC may push emergency resupply of Classes III and V forward to logistics release points as needed. The TF commander, XO, and S4 may determine that the mission requires additional support of Classes III and V, which can be pushed forward, uploaded, and positioned at the CTCP.

(2) Combat repair teams (CRTs) from the FSC are placed forward with each TF, usually down to the company/team. These teams are controlled by the company XO and first sergeant who communicate with the CTCP to ensure CRT activities are coordinated. The CRTs evacuate non-repairable equipment (due to time constraints or the lack of a required part) to the UMCP. UMCPs provide support to the CRTs as needed, and the CRTs evacuate equipment to the UCMP that can not be repaired within 24 hours. UCMP should locate on main axes or main supply routes. The S4 may request heavy equipment transport (HET) to assist in rearward evacuation.-

(3) When developing CHS for offensive operations, it must be responsive to several essential characteristics. As operations achieve success, the areas of casualty density move away from the supporting medical treatment facility (MTF). This causes the routes of medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) to lengthen. The heaviest patient workloads occur during disruption of the enemy's main defenses, at terrain or tactical barriers, during the assault on final objectives, and during enemy counterattacks. The accurate prediction of these workload points by the HSS planner is essential if MEDEVAC operations are to be successful. As advancing combat formations extend control of the battle area, supporting medical elements have the opportunity to clear the battlefield. This facilitates the acquisition of the battle wounded and reduces the vital time lapse between injury and treatment.

(a) The battalion surgeon, assisted by the battalion PA, field medical assistant, and the platoon sergeant, is responsible for the HSS plan for the battalion. The foundation of the battalion HSS plan is the battalion commander's guidance and the brigade HSS plan. As operational requirements or the mission changes, the HSS plan must be updated. See FM 4-02.4 for information on planning HSS for the maneuver battalion, MDMP, COA, and medical troop-leading procedures.

(b) The TF has three ambulance squads consisting of two M113A3 ambulances per squad. The maneuver team 1SG has operational control of the squad(s). The TF commander may choose to locate three ambulances forward with the main effort while the remaining three ambulances support the other elements or await dispatch at the TF aid station at the CTCP. Treatment squads trail the main body or can conduct split-team operations. In the offense, the factors of METT-TC determine whether casualties are evacuated by ambulance to a casualty collection point or an ambulance exchange point. Medical personnel from the forward support medical company dispatch ambulances forward to the AXP to receive and evacuate casualties from the TF treatment squads.

(4) In offensive operations, it may be difficult to maintain lines of communication. Support elements must be prepared to quickly reposition in order to maintain continuous support to the task force.

5-14. PLANNING

Planning for movement to contact plan is flexible and promotes subordinate initiative. Planning begins by developing the concept of the operation with focus on ultimate control of the objective and conducting a reverse planning sequence from the objective to the line of departure (LD). This is accomplished by developing a simple scheme of maneuver, issuing a clear commander's intent, and developing plans to execute likely maneuver options that may occur during execution. Increased emphasis is placed on developing an aggressive and flexible reconnaissance effort that is linked to the commander's PIR, which is normally focused on locating and gathering information about the enemy's strength, disposition, and activities.

a. **ISR**. The first consideration for a movement to contact is ISR planning. The brigade plays a major role based on the assets available and its links to division and higher assets. The TF is one of several elements executing the brigade's ISR plan.

(1) The first priority is to determine anticipated enemy locations, strengths, and actions. Potential enemy mission, intent, objectives, defensive locations, use of key terrain, avenues of approach and routes, engagement areas, and obstacles are among the items that must be identified early and incorporated into the ISR plan. Because the brigade is filling information gaps and establishing conditions for gaining information dominance, this is a period of intense use of information systems. Intelligence information must be gathered, analyzed, fused, and shared on a timely basis with those who can act upon the information. This information, available through ASAS, must be distributed throughout the TF.

(2) Various elements within the TF conduct ISR operations.

(a) *Scout Platoon*. The scout platoon has the soldiers that are best trained to function as the "eyes and ears" for the TF and is the element that can be committed the quickest. Scouts are used in the hardest to cover areas and to link with the brigade reconnaissance troop. They are also used to confirm and identify enemy locations, orientations, and dispositions. They report their observations and significant changes in enemy activity before, during, and after the movement to contact.

(b) *Ground Surveillance Radar*. GSR detects moving vehicles and personnel in open terrain at long ranges and provides information on the number, location, disposition, and types of targets. Normally, GSR covers open, high-speed approaches where early detection is critical. GSR also monitors defiles and detects enemy reconnaissance elements using oblique shots across the TF's sector along open, flat areas. The integration of GSR allows the scout platoon to focus on complex, urban, close, and restrictive terrain.

(c) *Remote Sensors*. Remote sensors are assets that belong to units outside the TF, but they are frequently placed in DS of the TF. These assets must be emplaced and monitored with information going to the TF S2, who relays it to higher headquarters.

(d) *Individual Weapon Platforms*. Each weapon platform, especially during patrolling or while manning observation points, is a source of information that needs to be integrated into the overall intelligence-gathering effort. The sniper squad is trained and well equipped to man OPs in support of the ISR effort (see Appendix F, Sniper Employment).

(3) Rapid exchange of relevant information between the TF and the brigade is required. Intelligence-gathering actions result in information dominance and, once established, can convert the movement to contact into an attack.

b. **Maneuver**. The TF plan for a movement to contact should be flexible and promote subordinate initiative. Developing a simple scheme of maneuver, issuing a clear commander's intent, and developing plans to execute likely maneuver options that may occur during execution contribute to flexibility and subordinate initiative.

(1) In developing his concept, the commander anticipates where he is likely to meet the enemy and then determines how he intends to develop the situation that leads to an attack under favorable conditions (actions on contact). The commander must attempt to visualize this process during his mission analysis and take into account his active and passive responses to enemy contact. The commander focuses on determining the TF's organization and formation that best retains his freedom of action upon contact and supports his concept against known or anticipated enemy forces.

(2) The commander and his staff develop plans for the maneuver options of attack, report and bypass, defend, and retrograde based on the higher commander's intent and the situation. They define the conditions in terms of the enemy and friendly strengths and dispositions that are likely to trigger the execution of each maneuver option. They identify likely locations of engagements based on known or suspected enemy locations. The commander states the bypass criteria for the advance guard. He must recognize the loss of tempo created by fighting every small enemy force encountered with the lead element. The advance guard may attack small enemy forces that it can quickly destroy without losing momentum, but larger or more stubborn enemy forces are best bypassed and destroyed by the main body.

(3) Areas of likely contact, known enemy positions, and areas that are potentially dangerous to the TF (such as potential ambush locations, obstacles, and open areas) require close planning consideration. The staff must carefully plan actions for moving through these danger areas quickly and securely.

(4) The scheme of maneuver covers the TF's actions from LD to consolidation and reorganization. The scheme of maneuver paragraph should address--

- Task and purpose of subordinate elements.
- Actions at known or likely enemy contact locations.
- Scheme of fires.
- Direct fire and indirect fire control measures.
- CCIR.
- Methods for moving through and crossing dangerous areas.
- The TF's formation and known locations where the formation will change.
- Actions and array of forces at the final objective or LOA.
- DPs and criteria for execution of maneuver options that may develop during execution.

(5) The following fundamentals guide the development of the scheme of maneuver for a movement to contact.

(a) Focus all efforts on finding the enemy by developing a strong reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition effort and through the employment of robust security forces.

(b) If at all possible, make contact with electronic means first. If that is not possible, then make contact with the smallest force possible, consistent with protecting the force.

(c) Make initial contact with small, mobile, self-contained forces to avoid decisive engagement of the main body. This procedure allows the commander maximum flexibility to develop the situation.

(d) Task-organize the force and use movement formations that enable the TF to deploy and attack rapidly in any direction.

(e) Maintain the ability to mass fires and effects rapidly in any direction.

(f) Keep forces within supporting distances to facilitate a flexible response.

(g) Maintain contact, once gained, regardless of the maneuver option adopted.

(h) Rely on SOPs and drills to develop the situation and maintain tempo. The key is swift massing of all available combat power against the enemy once contact is made.

(i) Develop a flexible scheme of maneuver since the location of the engagement with the enemy is not known. Flexibility is achieved by incorporating multiple DPs and triggers into the plan based upon where engagements are likely.

c. **Fire Support**. The following are key considerations for the fire support (FS) plan:

(1) Facilitate responsive and decentralized fires by a clear understanding of the essential fire support tasks for each phase of the operation, an understanding that is critical to the success of the FS plan. (See Appendix G , Fires Integration.) Once it makes contact, the TF shifts control of all available fires to the observer who is in the best position to control fires against the enemy.

(2) Plan targets based on known or suspected enemy locations and danger areas and to support future operations. Refine targets based on the reconnaissance effort as the operation progresses.

(3) Maximize the use of priority targets along the axis of advance. Plan triggers to put these targets into effect and cancel them based on the movement of the TF.

(4) Ensure immediately responsive fire support to the lead elements by assigning priority of fires to the ISR operations and or to the advance guard.

(5) Position observers effectively and maximize the use of lead maneuver forces to call for fires since they often have the best view of the enemy. Observers must understand the EFSTs for each phase of the operation.

(6) Synchronize the movement and positioning of artillery and mortars with the tempo of the TF and the FS requirements.

d. **Engineer Support**. The following are key considerations for the scheme of engineer operations:

(1) Task-organize engineer forces well forward to support potential breaching operations (Refer to Chapter 12 and FM 3-34.2 for detailed discussion of combined arms breaching operations).

(2) Use the advance guard, which is normally the priority for support, to task-organize with additional mobility assets and engineer forces.

(3) Ensure the reconnaissance plan integrates the collection of obstacle and terrain intelligence.

(4) Maintain the flexibility to mass engineers to breach complex obstacles.

(5) Plan obstacle belts, obstacle control measures, and situational obstacles to support flank security. Develop and adjust obstacle locations and triggers for execution based on the TF's movement and the enemy situation.

(6) Develop plans for the handover of marked obstacles, lanes, and bypasses.

(7) Consider the requirement for route maintenance, clearance, and repair.

e. **Air Defense Support**. The following are key considerations for the air defense plan.

(1) Use the information available to friendly forces to integrate ADA assets into the TF formation to provide all-round air defense protection. Normal priorities for protection are the main body and the advance guard.

(2) Shift and reposition ADA assets based on the TF's movement, selected maneuver option, and changes in the enemy air situation.

(3) Ensure adequate air defense of forces during movements through choke points, breach lanes, bridges, and restrictive terrain.

f. **Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Support**. The following are key considerations for NBC planning. (See also Appendix C.)

(1) Ensure the scout platoon is prepared for NBC reconnaissance tasks.

(2) Disseminate NBC threats, once detected, immediately throughout the brigade.

(3) Integrate and synchronize the use of smoke to support critical actions such as breaching or assaults. Ensure artillery and mortar smoke complement each other.

(4) Develop decontamination plans based on the commander's priorities and vulnerability analysis. Disseminate planned and active sites via FM or FBCB2.

g. **Combat Service Support**. The following are key considerations for the CSS plan.

(1) Continuously update the CSS plan based on near-real-time status of units. Ensure the CSS plan is responsive and flexible enough to support all maneuver options. Plan support from initiation of the operation to the final objective or LOA.

(2) Support the TF using the forward support company (FSC/HHC) for Class I, Class II, Class V, and maintenance and repair parts support.

(3) Integrate backup support from the forward support battalion to include deployment of a forward logistics element to provide Class III, Class V, HSS, and maintenance and repair parts to reinforce the support provided by the FSC/HHC.

(4) Weigh the risks that extended distances create for security of MSRs and CSS assets based on the potential of undetected or bypassed enemy forces.

(5) Use all available assets to develop and maintain an accurate enemy picture behind the lead maneuver elements.

(6) Plan and rehearse for enemy contact.

(7) Plan and coordinate the locations, displacements, and routes of CSS assets to maintain responsive support.

(8) Plan and coordinate for aerial resupply.

h. **Preparation**. During preparation, the TF continues progress toward establishing information dominance. The primary concerns are that the TF commander and staff receive the latest information and that plans are updated to reflect the changes. The TF commander must ensure that his subordinates understand his concept and intent and their individual missions as new information becomes available. He normally uses backbriefs and rehearsals to ensure his intent is understood and all actions are integrated and synchronized. Simple, flexible plans that rely on SOPs and are rehearsed repetitively against various enemy conditions are essential to success.

i. **Inspections**. The commander inspects subordinate unit preparations to ensure they are consistent with his intent and concept of operations. He emphasizes subordinate plans to move through danger areas, conduct actions on contact, and transition into a

maneuver option. The commander ensures each subordinate force understands its assigned mission during the movement and its potential maneuver options that may develop during execution.

j. **Rehearsals**. The TF's leadership rehearses the plan against a wide range of likely enemy COAs that would cause the TF to execute various maneuver options at different times and locations. The goal of rehearsals is to prepare the TF's subordinate commanders for potential situations that may arise during execution and force them to make decisions under the anticipated conditions of the battle. This promotes flexibility and agility while reinforcing the commander's intent. The commander seeks to rehearse the operation from initiation to occupation of the final objective or LOA. Often, due to time constraints, the commander prioritizes the maneuver options and enemy COAs to be rehearsed based on the time available. The focus of the rehearsal is locating the enemy, developing the situation, executing a maneuver option, and exploiting success. The rehearsal must consider the potential of encountering stationary or moving enemy forces. Other actions to consider during rehearsals are--

- Actions to cross known danger areas.
- The advance guard making contact with a small enemy force.
- The advance guard making contact with a large force beyond its capabilities to defeat.
- The advance guard making contact with an obstacle the ISR force has not identified and reported.
- A flank security force making contact with a small force.
- A flank security force making contact with a large force beyond its capability to defeat.
- Actions to report and bypass an enemy force (based on the bypass criteria).
- Transition into a maneuver option.

k. **Reconnaissance**. The brigade and TF ISR effort, a key part of the execution, begins during preparation for the movement to contact. The primary focus of the ISR effort is to locate the enemy.

(1) ***Locate the Enemy***. The brigade reconnaissance troop, supported by higher-level collection assets, seeks to locate the enemy well ahead of the brigade. This provides the brigade time to update plans, attack the enemy deep in the brigade's battlespace, select favorable terrain and positions for the direct fire engagement, position observers, and deploy prior to contact.

(a) When they detect enemy forces, reconnaissance and surveillance assets shift to determine the full extent of the enemy's strength and disposition. Reconnaissance assets gather vital intelligence on the enemy force and attempt to determine the enemy force's vulnerabilities, such as an exposed flank. The brigade hands over located enemy positions in the TF's area to the TF scout platoon. If the scout platoon encounters obstacles, it determines size, location, and composition and seeks bypasses. If it finds a bypass, the scouts assist in guiding following units to the bypass. If it cannot find a bypass, the scout platoon advises the commander on locations for a breach and assists in guiding forces to the breach site.

(b) The TF advance guard maintains contact with the TF scout platoon to coordinate combat actions and exchange relevant information. As the TF scout platoon locates enemy positions, it hands these locations off to the advance guard. In some cases,

elements of the TF scout platoon maintain contact with the enemy and guide the advance guard maneuver forces. Regardless of the technique used, these actions should be rehearsed and closely coordinated during execution to prevent fratricide and confusion.

(2) ***Support the TF's Movement***. The task force scout platoon emphasizes terrain and obstacle reconnaissance primarily focused along the task force's axis of advance. The scout platoon seeks to identify and confirm restrictive terrain, trafficability of roads and routes, conditions of bridges, and locations of fording sites. The platoon also reconnoiters potentially dangerous areas such as obstacles, defiles, likely enemy positions, or possible ambush sites. If the TF scout platoon cannot clear these areas, the advance guard must assume a more deliberate movement technique.

(3) ***Support Actions upon Contact***. Once an R&S element locates an enemy force, the TF continuously observes it. Reconnaissance assets assist friendly forces by guiding them along the best routes to engage the enemy. As contact develops, reconnaissance assets report enemy actions and battle damage assessment.

5-15. EXECUTION

The TF moves rapidly to maintain the advantage of an appropriate tempo. However, the commander must balance the need for speed with the requirement for security. This decision is based on the effectiveness of the ISR effort, friendly mobility, effects of terrain, and the enemy's capabilities. The situational understanding available within TF and subordinate company teams allows close tracking of the movement and location of the TF units. Location and movement of the security forces are continually monitored through voice reports or FBCB2 to ensure adequate security for the main body and to ensure the security forces are within supporting range of the main body, mortars, and artillery. The movement of CS and CSS units are controlled by their parent organizations, which adjust their movements to meet support requirements, avoid congestion of routes, and ensure responsiveness.

a. **Actions at Obstacles**. Obstacles pose a significant threat to the TF's momentum.

(1) Once a TF element detects an obstacle, it immediately distributes its location and description FM or digitally throughout the TF. The TF quickly seeks a secure and favorable bypass. If a bypass is available, the unit in contact with the obstacle exploits and marks the bypass; it also digitally distributes the bypass around the obstacle as soon as possible. Enemy forces normally overwatch obstacles. Units should approach all obstacles and restrictive terrain with the same diligence with which they approach a known enemy position.

(2) When the TF must breach, it takes the steps to execute the breaching fundamentals of suppress, obscure, secure, reduce, and assault (SOSRA) to create a breach lane and continue the movement to contact. Engineer forces from the main body support the breach effort by creating lanes, improving the marking of lanes, and guiding the main body through the obstacle.

b. **Destruction of Small Enemy Forces**. The TF destroys small enemy forces with a combination of indirect fires and maneuver.

(1) Depending on the commander's bypass criteria, the advance guard may fix small enemy forces identified by the reconnaissance and surveillance force. Once it fixes the enemy, the advance guard leaves a small combat force to contain the enemy until the main body can destroy it.

(2) The advance guard must provide the location of such a fixed enemy force to the TF S2 who then distributes the information to all units in the TF via FM or digital means. Detailed cross-talk between main body and fixing force commanders is critical to coordinate actions and avoid fratricide. The fixing force directs or guides the main body elements to the best location to attack the enemy force. Once the TF destroys the enemy, all forces quickly move to continue the advance.

c. **Report and Bypass**. When conducting a movement to contact as part of a larger force, the higher commander establishes bypass criteria that allow the TF to report and bypass enemy forces of a specific size.

(1) When an enemy force meets the criteria, the TF fixes the enemy force and leaves a small force to maintain contact while the remainder of the TF continues the advance. Once bypassed, the destruction of the enemy force becomes the responsibility of the TF's higher commander.

(2) Bypassed forces present a serious threat to forces that follow the maneuver elements, especially CSS elements. It is imperative that the bypassed enemy forces' locations and strengths be distributed throughout the TF to enable following units to move around these threats.

d. **Meeting Engagement.** A meeting engagement is a combat action that occurs when the TF, not completely deployed for battle, collides with and engages a sizable enemy force at an unexpected time and place. The enemy force may be moving or stationary. The goal, once in contact, is to maneuver quickly to overcome the enemy before he can react. This requires the commander to keep his force in a posture ready to react immediately to contact and develop the situation. Subordinate company teams must quickly react to contact, develop the situation, report, and gain a position of advantage over the enemy to give the TF time and space to act effectively. The TF's success depends on its subordinate units' ability to develop the situation effectively. The steps to do this follow.

(1) When initial contact is made, it must quickly determine the size and activity of the enemy force and avoid being fixed or destroyed. If possible, the force that makes initial contact avoids detection.

(2) If the enemy is moving, the force making initial contact determines the direction of movement and the size and composition of the force. The observers place fires on the lead enemy forces. Speed of decision and execution is critical when the enemy is moving.

(3) If the enemy is stationary, the force determines whether the enemy force is occupying prepared positions and whether they are reinforced by obstacles and minefields. The force attempts to identify antitank weapon positions, the enemy's flanks, and gaps in his positions.

(4) The advance guard moves quickly to overpower and destroy platoon-size and smaller security forces. Larger forces normally require deployment of the main body. The advance guard protects the main body by fixing enemy forces larger than platoon size, which allows the task force main body to retain its freedom to maneuver.

(5) In developing the situation, the advance guard commander maintains pressure on the enemy by fire and maneuver. He probes and conducts a vigorous reconnaissance of the enemy's flanks to determine the enemy's exact location, composition, and disposition. The advance guard immediately transmits this information to the TF commander.

(6) The TF commander uses this information to develop a plan of action by selecting a maneuver option from the several actions-on-contact options developed during planning.

e. **Maneuver Options**. Timely and accurate intelligence will facilitate the TF commander in his selection of the appropriate maneuver option. Normally, the commander makes the final decision for execution of a maneuver option based on the progress of the initial engagement of the advance guard. The movement to contact generally ends with the commitment of the main body. The following paragraphs provide a general description of the options that may develop after a movement to contact.

(1) ***Bypass***. If rapid forward movement is required and the brigade commander has authorized bypass of enemy forces, the TF can bypass. If the size and mobility of the bypassed force represents a threat, the TF must fix or contain the enemy force until released by the brigade.

(2) ***Hasty Ambush***. Ambush is effective against a moving or infiltrating force that is not aware of the presence of the TF. Instead of immediately engaging the enemy, the advance guard (and possibly the entire TF) moves into hasty attack-by-fire positions oriented on an engagement area. This option is enabled by the information available from FBCB2 (if equipped) and the speed and accuracy with which FRAGOs and other instructions can be passed. When most of the enemy is in the engagement area, the TF uses massed fires and maneuver to attack the enemy.

(3) ***Attack***. The TF commander directs an attack when the TF has greater combat power than the enemy or when he assesses that the TF can reach a decisive outcome. The commander quickly develops a scheme of maneuver and concept of fires for the attack and digitally distributes orders to subordinate company teams. The commander employs fires, CAS, and situational obstacles. He controls the movement, deployment, and possible changes to the task organization of the TF forces. The envelopment is normally the most desirable form of maneuver and is used when there is sufficient maneuver space. The commander normally seeks to envelop the enemy force by fixing or blocking the bulk of the enemy force and then attacking a vulnerable flank. A penetration is normally used against a stationary enemy force that does not have an assailable flank, such as one in a perimeter defense. After a successful attack, the TF may continue the movement to contact or execute other missions as directed by the brigade commander.

(4) ***Defend***. The TF commander directs a defense when the TF has insufficient combat power to attack or when the enemy's strength forces the TF to halt and prepare for a more deliberate operation. The TF maneuvers to the best available defensible terrain--either to the front or rear. The commander may direct the advance guard or another security force to delay an enemy attack to provide time for deployment of the task force. Company teams quickly deploy, establish security, array forces, and develop fire and obstacle plans. Special emphasis is placed on flank protection and adjacent unit coordination. As the enemy attacks, the commander repositions and maneuvers forces to defeat the enemy through massed fires, situational obstacles, and counterattacks. The commander seeks to defeat an attacking enemy force and create the opportunity for offensive action. In some cases, the TF may need to retain its position to allow the brigade commander time to commit additional forces.

(5) ***Retrograde***. The TF commander directs a retrograde (Figure 5-14, page 5-34) when the TF lacks the combat power to attack or defend, improve a tactical situation, or

prevent a worse situation from developing. Lead elements of the TF establish initial defensive positions while nonessential CS and CSS assets reposition to the rear. Indirect fires, obstacles, and smoke are employed to assist forward elements with disengagement and displacement. Task forces in contact avoid becoming decisively engaged.

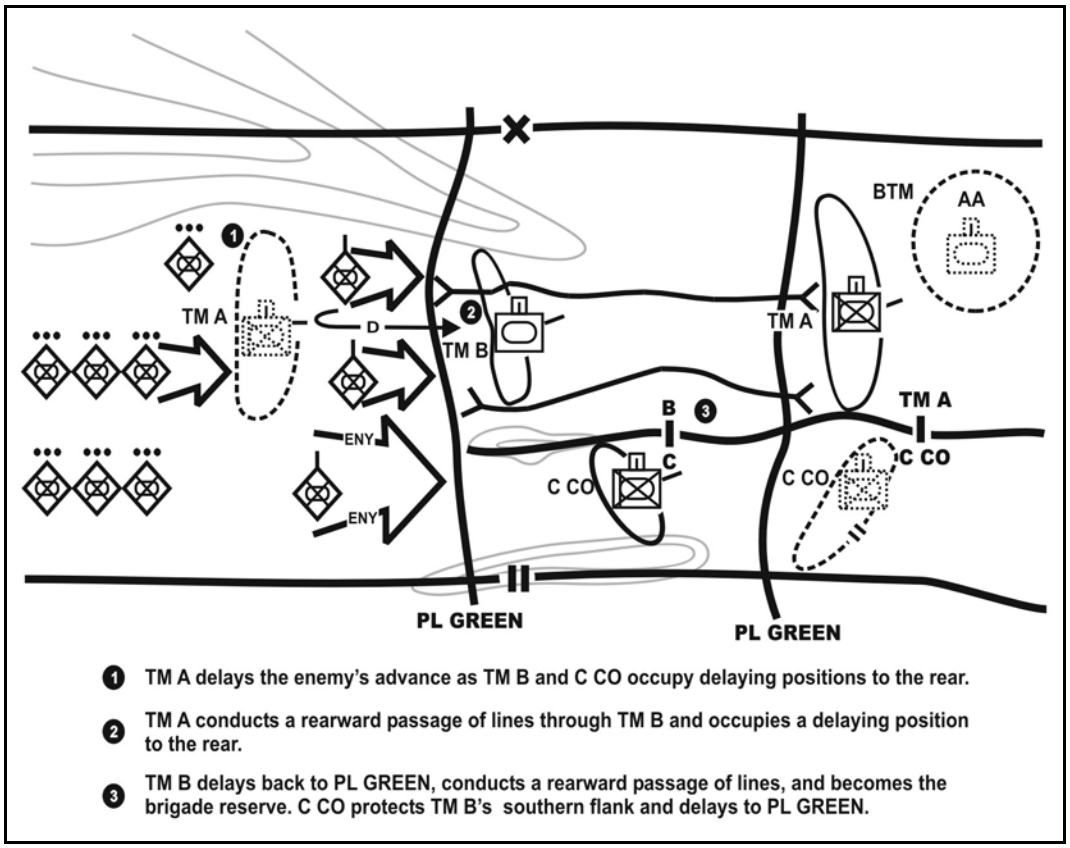


Figure 5-14. Task force in retrograde.

5-16. ATTACKS

An attack at the TF level is a type of offensive action characterized by close combat, direct fire, maneuver, and support from indirect fires. When the TF commander decides to attack, he must mass the effects of overwhelming combat power against a portion (or portions) of the enemy force or terrain with a tempo and intensity that the enemy cannot match. Information dominance enables the TF commander to choose the places where he wants to attack the enemy, places where the enemy is weak and least prepared for an attack and where the TF has the greatest opportunity for success. The following paragraphs discuss the tactics for conducting--

- A force-oriented attack against a stationary enemy force.
- A force-oriented attack against a moving enemy force.
- A terrain-oriented attack.

Attacks range along a continuum defined at one end by fragmentary orders (FRAGOs), which direct the rapid execution of battle drills by forces immediately available, and at the other end by detailed plans and orders. These attacks rely more on an implicit understanding than on electronic communication with detailed orders and appropriate

branches and sequels that make understanding explicit. At one extreme of the continuum, the battalion discovers the general enemy situation through a movement to contact and launches an attack as a continuation of the meeting engagement to exploit a temporary advantage in relative combat power and to preempt enemy actions. At the other extreme of the continuum, the battalion moves into an attack from a reserve position or assembly area with detailed knowledge of the enemy, a task organization designed specifically for the attack, and a fully rehearsed plan. Most attacks fall somewhere between the two ends of the continuum.

5-17. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ATTACK

As discussed earlier, the objective of an attack may be force- or terrain-oriented. A terrain-oriented objective requires the TF to seize or secure a designated geographical area. A force-oriented objective requires the TF to focus its efforts on a designated enemy force. The enemy force may be stationary or moving. All attacks depend on synchronization for success. They require planning, coordination via digital or analog means, and time to prepare.

a. By properly leveraging the digital systems and sensors, the TF commander and staff are able to obtain near-real-time knowledge of enemy composition, locations, activity, and probable intentions. The information systems available to the TF facilitate detailed planning, but the substance of sound planning depends on the abilities of a well-trained commander and staff. With the information available, the TF commander is better able to war-game and plan his actions against an enemy force from either stationary or moving C2 platforms. While the TF plans, the enemy will improve his defenses, disengage, or conduct spoiling attacks of his own. Clearly, planning must be accomplished in the shortest time possible and must accommodate changes based on what the enemy does.

b. The TF commander and his staff translate the assigned mission from the brigade into specific missions for subordinate company teams. The staff immediately forwards these missions, along with the appropriate portions of the brigade's plans and orders, digitally to subordinate company teams to facilitate parallel planning. Commanders at all levels work together to develop the best plans. This requires sharing information freely between the command posts. The goal is not just to reduce the time required to produce and distribute the plans; the real goal is to produce a better plan by including input from adjacent, higher, and lower elements. Additionally, this collaboration promotes buy-in and understanding of the plan, thereby enhancing preparation and execution.

5-18. FORCE-ORIENTED ATTACK AGAINST A STATIONARY ENEMY FORCE

The TF may attack a stationary enemy force as part of a counterattack, spoiling attack, or as an initial attack against an enemy defense. The TF may also attack a stationary force as part of a brigade movement to contact or exploitation.

a. **Planning**. The focus of planning is to develop a fully synchronized plan that masses all available combat power against the enemy.

b. **Scheme of Maneuver**. The TF directs its main effort against an objective, ideally an enemy weakness, which will cause the collapse of the enemy defense. The TF seeks to

attack the enemy's flanks, rear, or supporting formations. By doing so, the TF retains the initiative and reduces its own vulnerabilities.

(1) The commander seeks to identify a poorly defended avenue of approach, a small unit lacking mutual support within the enemy defense, or a weak flank that he can exploit to gain a tactical advantage. When attacking a well-prepared enemy defense, the commander normally plans to isolate and then destroy small vulnerable portions of the enemy defense in sequence. The commander and staff develop the plan using a reverse planning process from actions on the objective back to the LD or assembly area. They incorporate plans for exploiting success and opportunities that may develop during execution. They emphasize synchronization of mounted and dismounted movement, maneuver, fires, and support throughout the attack.

(2) The commander and staff must consider the enemy's strength and obstacles to determine when and where the TF may need breaching operations. The size of the enemy force overwatching the obstacle drives the type of breach the TF conducts and whether the TF can conduct a successful breaching operation. The commander and staff consider the enemy's ability to mass combat power, reposition his forces, or commit his reserve. The TF then develops a scheme of maneuver to mass sufficient combat power at an enemy weakness. The location selected for breaching and penetration depends largely on a weakness in the enemy's defense where its covering fires are limited.

(3) The reverse planning process is an essential tool in building an effective plan to attack a defending enemy. By starting with actions on the objective and working back to the line of departure, the staff can allocate combat power, mobility assets, and indirect fires (suppression and obscuration).

c. **Fire Support**. The following are considerations for the FS plan:

(1) Position fire support assets to support the reconnaissance effort.

(2) Use deception fires to deceive the enemy as to the location of the main effort.

(3) Plan suppressive and obscuration fires at the point of penetration.

(4) Plan suppressive and obscuration fires in support of breaching operations.

(5) Plan fires in support of the approach to the objective. These fires engage enemy security forces, destroy bypassed enemy forces, and screen friendly movement.

(6) Synchronize fires on the objective to achieve the effects of suppress, neutralize, and destroy critical enemy forces that can most affect the TF's closure on the objective.

(7) Plan fires beyond the objective to support an attack or defense.

(8) Use indirect fires and CAS to delay or neutralize repositioning enemy forces and reserves.

(9) Plan locations of critical friendly zones (CFZs) to protect critical actions and HVT's, such as support forces, breaching efforts, and artillery assets.

d. **Engineer Support**. Maintaining the mobility of the TF in offensive operations is critical. The TF engineer must plan and allocate mobility resources to the security force, advance guard, and main body. The security force has just enough mobility resources to cover its own movement and to complete the reconnaissance mission. The advance guard needs enough resources to conduct breaching operations, such as opening lanes through obstacles for the main body to pass. (Refer to Chapter 12 and FM 3-34.2 for a detailed discussion of combined arms breaching operations.) If the obstacle is complex or covered by a relatively larger force, the main body deploys to conduct a breaching operation. Engineer task organization is based on supporting the TF breaching operations with

minimal engineer assets under TF control to transition to a TF breach in suport of a deliberate attack, if needed. The TF uses situational obstacles to attack an enemy's vulnerability or specific course of action and can use situational obstacles to help secure the TF flanks. The following are considerations for the scheme of engineer operations.

(1) Plan for adjustment of the breach location based on the latest obstacle intelligence.

(2) Ensure information on obstacles receives immediate TF-wide dissemination including supporting CS and CSS platforms and units.

(3) Ensure digital topographic support system (DTSS) products are available and distributed on point of penetration, planned breach locations, and possible bypasses.

(4) Ensure adequate mobility support is task-organized well forward during the approach to the objective to support breaching requirements for complex obstacles.

(5) Mass engineers to support breaching operations.

(6) Support assaulting forces with engineers to breach enemy protective obstacles.

(7) Ensure adequate guides, traffic control, and lane improvements to support movement of follow-on forces and CSS traffic.

(8) Use situational obstacles for flank security.

e. **Air Defense Support**. In offensive operations, air defense units move to the position from which they can best protect the TF. The enemy uses helicopters primarily against armored forces. The Bradley Stinger fighting vehicle (BSFV) or Linebacker platoon normally provides direct support coverage to the TF. Priorities for protection may include company teams, fire support, engineer elements, command and control nodes, and logistics assets. ADA coverage is increased in areas and activities most vulnerable to air attack such as breaching operations or movements through restrictive terrain.

f. **Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Support**. The following are considerations for NBC.

(1) The reconnaissance platoon should be prepared for NBC reconnaissance tasks.

(2) Disseminate any detected NBC threats throughout the TF immediately via FBCB2 and FM voice.

(3) Integrate and synchronize the use of smoke to support critical actions such as breaching or assaults. Ensure artillery, mortar, and mechanical smoke are complementary.

(4) Develop decontamination plans based on the commander’s priorities and vulnerability analysis. Disseminate planned and active decontamination sites via FBCB2.

g. **Combat Service Support**. The following are considerations for the CSS plan.

(1) Integrate the movement and positioning of CSS assets with the scheme of maneuver to ensure immediate support of anticipated requirements.

(2) Ensure adequate CSS support to the reconnaissance and surveillance effort. The S4 must plan well and integrate timely resupply and evacuation support of forward reconnaissance and surveillance assets into the ISR plan. He focuses on medical evacuation, especially air evacuation.

(3) Plan immediate support to high-risk operations such as breaching or assaults through the forward positioning of support assets.

(4) Plan for reorganization on or near the objective once the TF secures the objective. Articulate clear priorities of support during reorganization.

h. **Preparation**. The TF uses available time prior to the attack to conduct extensive reconnaissance, precombat checks and inspections, and rehearsals while concealing attack preparations from the enemy. The commander and staff refine the plan based on continuously updated intelligence. They use digital tools to allow subordinate company teams maximum time to prepare. Subordinates conduct parallel planning and start their preparation for the attack immediately after the TF issues a FRAGO. As more intelligence becomes available, the TF commander revises orders and distributes them via FM or FBCB2 when available, thereby giving subordinates more time to prepare for the attack. Regardless of the time available, the commander must conduct detailed planning and supervision of subordinate preparations.

i. **Inspections**. The commander supervises subordinate troop-leading procedures to ensure planning and preparations are on track and consistent with his intent. The commander may inspect subordinate unit order briefs and rehearsals. He focuses his inspections on the main effort and critical events such as assaults, breaching operations, and passages of lines. Since the commander cannot be everywhere at once, he maximizes the use of other key leaders and technology to assist him. Subordinate orders, provided digitally (when possible) back to the TF staff, allow the staff to check for congruence with the TF plans.

j. **Rehearsals**. The TF usually conducts rehearsals, but the type and technique may vary based on time available. During the combined arms rehearsal, the TF S2 portrays a thinking, uncooperative enemy with emphasis on enemy repositioning, employment of fires, and commitment of reserves. The primary focus of the rehearsal is actions on the objective. Each subordinate commander addresses the conduct of his mission as the rehearsal progresses. The rehearsal places special emphasis on timing of actions and the coordinated maneuver of forces. All subordinate commanders must accurately portray how long it takes to complete assigned tasks and how much space is required by their force. Direct and indirect fire plans are covered in great detail, to include the massing, distribution, shifting, lifting, and control of fires. The commander ensures subordinate plans are coordinated and consistent with his intent. The rehearsal also covers the following:

- Plans to execute follow-on missions or exploit success.
- Likely times and locations where a reserve is needed.
- Execution of the FS plan, to include shifting of fires, employment of CAS, adjusting of FSCMs, and positioning of observers.
- Breaching operations.
- Passages of lines.
- Contingency plans for actions against enemy counterattacks, repositioning, commitment of reserves, or use of NBC capabilities.
- Consolidation and reorganization.
- Execution of branches or sequels assigned by brigade.
- Execution of the CSS plan, to include UMCP, CASEVAC, movement of combat trains, and emergency resupply usage and movement.

k. **Reconnaissance**. Effective and current intelligence is a prerequisite for a successful attack.

(1) Before mounting an attack, the commander needs to determine the enemy's strength and disposition. In an attack, the entire intelligence collection, analysis, and

dissemination process must rapidly respond to the commander's critical information requirements. The brigade provides most of the information available to the TF commander and staff through FM updates or ASAS, when equipped. The commander must receive an accurate picture of the enemy's defense so he can decide on a COA and act faster than the enemy can react.

(2) When preparing for an attack, the commander and staff participate in development of the brigade's ISR plan. This is a well-resourced and coordinated reconnaissance effort that provides a detailed picture of the enemy situation prior to execution of the attack. This reconnaissance effort must include redundant information-gathering systems to ensure continuous flow of information to the brigade and, correspondingly, from the brigade to the TFs. The TF commander uses this intelligence to decide on a COA and make refinements to the plan. The ISR effort also provides him continuous updates during the attack so he can adjust execution of the operation based on the enemy's reactions.

l. **Enemy's Current Array of Forces**. The intelligence available to the TF comes from a continuous stream of information that begins with ISR systems, such as joint surveillance target attack radar system (JSTARS), UAVs, TF scouts, and the BRT, to establish the intelligence links to the TF.

(1) The first priority is to confirm information available on the enemy's composition, disposition, capabilities, and most probable course of action. The next priorities are the effects of weather and terrain and how the enemy is likely to fight. The S2 attempts to identify what the enemy will do and what information the TF needs to confirm the enemy's action. The TF ISR effort focuses on identifying indicators required for confirming the enemy's actual COA. This information is vital for developing and refining plans. Ideally, the TF does not make final decisions on how to execute the attack until it can identify the current array of enemy forces. Key areas to identify for a defending enemy force include--

- Composition, disposition, and capabilities of enemy forces along a flank or at an area selected for penetration.
- Composition, disposition, and capabilities of security forces.
- Location, orientation, type, depth, and composition of obstacles.
- Locations of secure bypasses around obstacles.
- Composition, disposition, and capabilities of defending combat formations within the enemy's MBA.
- Composition, disposition, capabilities, and location of reserves.
- Location of routes the enemy may use to counterattack or reinforce his defense.
- Types of enemy fortifications and survivability efforts.

(2) Reconnaissance forces patrol to gain intelligence. As time permits, reconnaissance assets observe the enemy defense from advantageous positions (OPs) to locate gaps, identify weapons systems and fighting positions, view rehearsals and positioning, and determine the enemy's security activities and times of decreased readiness. The S2 must discern any enemy deception efforts such as phony obstacles, dummy emplacements, and deception positions designed to confuse an attacker.

m. **Enemy Engagement Areas**. The TF commander, supported by the S2, seeks to define the limits of the enemy engagement areas. This includes locations where the

enemy can mass fires, weapon ranges, direct fire integration with obstacles, ability to shift fires, and mutual support between positions. This analysis requires effective terrain analysis, confirmed locations of enemy weapons systems (by system type), and a good understanding of the enemy's tactics. Reconnaissance forces report locations, orientation, and composition of defending weapons systems and obstacles. The analysis of the enemy's direct and indirect fire and obstacle plan assists the commander in determining when the TF must deploy, how to time and use indirect fires, how to avoide maneuvering inside the enemy's EA, and how feasible his scheme of maneuver is. The use of long-range indirect fires allows the commander to shape what the enemy can do relative to engagement areas. Key to such actions is the emplacement of complex obstacles.

n. **Enemy's Vulnerabilities**. The intelligence system and ISR effort also seek to identify enemy vulnerabilities, which may include--

- Gaps in the enemy's defense.
- Exposed or weak flanks.
- Enemy units that lack mutual support.
- Unobserved or weakly defended avenues of approach to the enemy's flank or rear.
- Covered and concealed routes that allow the TF to close on the enemy.
- Weak obstacles or fortifications in an enemy defense, especially along a flank.

o. **Support on the Approach to the Objective**. Reconnaissance elements initially focus on the enemy's security forces forward of his main defense to locate his positions and obstacles along the TF's planned routes of advance. Reconnaissance forces also locate gaps and routes that allow them to infiltrate into the enemy main defensive area or rear area. The ISR effort seeks to locate enemy forces that may reposition and affect the TF's approach to the enemy's main defense. Successful attacks depend on reconnaissance forces' directing indirect fires on targets in the enemy's rear that isolate the enemy's front-line forces and prevent them from being reinforced. A rapid, secure advance to the enemy's main defense depends on the reconnaissance effort's locating enemy security forces and obstacles.

p. **Execution**. The TF commander positions ISR assets to maintain observation of enemy reactions to the TF's maneuver on the objective. Reconnaissance assets focus on areas that the enemy will likely use to reposition forces, commit reserves, and counterattack. As the engagement on the objective develops, reconnaissance forces report enemy reactions, repositioning, and BDA. Again, reconnaissance elements target and engage enemy repositioning forces, reserves, counterattacking forces, and other high-payoff targets with indirect fires. Early identification of enemy reactions is essential for the TF's ability to maintain the momentum and initiative during the attack.

(1) ***Approach to the Objective***. During the approach, the TF is ready to--

- Bypass or breach obstacles.
- React to artillery, chemical strikes, air attack, and electronic warfare (EW).
- Transition to different formations based on the terrain and enemy situation.
- Employ forces to screen or guard flanks that may become exposed or threatened during the approach.
- Avoid terrain features that are likely enemy artillery reference points, locations for chemical strikes, or locations for situational obstacles.

- Destroy or force the withdrawal of opposing enemy security forces.
- Minimize the effects of enemy deception.

(a) When the situation permits, a defending enemy generally establishes a security and disruption area around his forces to provide early warning of an attack, deny friendly reconnaissance, and disrupt the friendly force's attack. The strength of the enemy's security area depends on the time available, forces available, and his doctrine or pattern of operations. The TF must counter the effects of enemy security forces to ensure an unimpeded and concealed approach. Before the attack, reconnaissance forces seek to locate enemy security forces. Once located, the commander has the following options available:

- Destroy them immediately with indirect fires and CAS (preferred option).
- Destroy them with indirect fires and CAS during the approach to the objective.
- Conduct limited objective attacks prior to execution of the main attack.
- Employ a strong advance guard to destroy or force the withdrawal of enemy security forces during the approach to the objective.

(b) The TF must maintain a steady, controlled movement. Speed and dispersion, facilitated by close coordination and communication, are the norm with massing of weapons' effects to destroy the enemy's defense. If the formation is too slow or becomes too concentrated, it is vulnerable to massed enemy fires.

(2) ***Actions on the Objective***. The TF commander maneuvers combat forces and employs fires, situational obstacles, and smoke to create favorable conditions for decisive maneuver against the enemy. The commander commits maneuver forces and fires to isolate, then rupture, a small vulnerable portion of the enemy's defense to gain a flank or create a penetration. The TF achieves final destruction of the enemy force through the attack of assaulting forces.

(3) ***Fires***. The TF employs fires to weaken the enemy's position and set the conditions for success prior to closure within direct fire range of the enemy.

(a) Initially, preparatory fires focus on the destruction of key enemy forces that can most affect the scheme of maneuver. For example, during an attack to penetrate an enemy defense, the initial focus of preparatory fires is to destroy the enemy positions at the selected point of penetration. Preparatory fires may also--

- Weaken or neutralize enemy reserves.
- Emplace artillery-delivered situational obstacles to block enemy reserve routes into the objective.
- Deceive the enemy as to the TF's actual intentions.
- Destroy enemy security forces.
- Obscure friendly movements and deployment.

(b) The coordination between fires and maneuver is critical. As maneuver forces approach the enemy defense, the commander shifts fires and smoke to suppress and obscure the enemy. Proper timing and adjustment of fires enable a secure closure by the maneuver force on the enemy's positions. The COP provides maneuver force locations and allows their movement to be timed so that they can rapidly close on the enemy's position with minimum exposure to enemy fires. The commander must monitor the success of the preparatory fires to determine whether adequate conditions exist for commitment of the force. Reconnaissance elements provide battle damage assessment

(BDA) to the commander to assist him in making this decision. The commander may need to adjust the speed of the task force's approach to the objective.

(4) ***Fix.*** The TF can fix the bulk of the enemy forces into given positions or pursue a COA that limits the options available to the enemy.

(a) In limiting the options available to the enemy, the objective is to reduce the uncertainty during the battle. The primary goal is to isolate the unit targeted for destruction by preventing the enemy from laterally repositioning or reinforcing it.

(b) A company team normally fixes the enemy force by attacking an objective(s) that isolates a portion of the enemy's defense. In open terrain, the most common task for the supporting force is to fix the enemy with direct and indirect fire. In more complex terrain, the supporting force may need to seize terrain or destroy key enemy forces in limited objective attacks. Demonstrations and feints may also fix the enemy. The use of fires and CAS is vital in attacking enemy forces and reserves in depth to prevent their commitment against the TF.

(c) Before commitment, forces remain dispersed and outside the enemy's direct fire range, and they avoid exposing themselves to enemy observation. Forces not yet committed use this time to conduct final preparations and make adjustments to their plans. A key action during this time is the update of intelligence on enemy locations and conditions. The S2 should have an updated intelligence summary available just prior to the TF's crossing the LD. The commander uses assault positions, phase lines, terrain index reference system (TIRS), or checkpoints to control the positioning of the forces not yet committed. Commanders throughout the TF continuously assess the situation. Subordinate commanders anticipate decisions by the TF commander based on tactical information received. The commander commits subordinate forces when the desired levels of enemy suppression, destruction, and obscuration are achieved. Timely reporting, cross-talk, accurate assessments, and sharing of information by subordinate commanders are paramount.

(5) ***Decisive Maneuver***. The attacker must be agile enough to concentrate his forces and mass his combat power by decisive maneuver before the enemy can reorient his defense.

(a) Normally, the destruction of a defending enemy force dictates an assault of the objective. The supporting force shifts direct and indirect fires and repositions as required to support the maneuver of assaulting forces. As the assaulting force is committed, the TF commander and staff ensure that current information is available on the following:

- Locations and types of enemy contact on the objective.
- Locations of reconnaissance forces.
- Locations of lanes and obstacles to include lane markings.
- Recognition signals and guides.
- Specific routes to use for the approach.
- Locations and orientations of fires from friendly forces.
- Additions or modifications of graphic control measures.

(b) The previously dispersed assaulting force(s) quickly assembles into combat formations and rapidly maneuvers to destroy the enemy forces and clear assigned objectives. The assaulting force(s) moves along covered and concealed routes to an exposed enemy flank, created penetration, or other position of advantage. Smoke assists with concealing the movement of assaulting forces. The assault includes destruction of

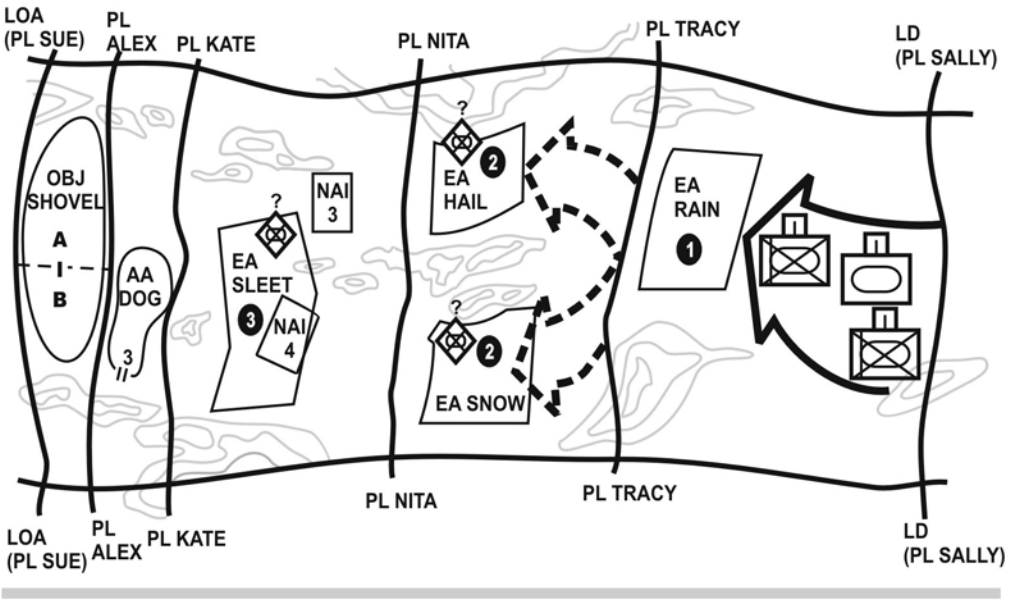
defending forces and clearance of trenches and fortifications and may involve a combination of mounted and dismounted movement. The commander's main focus is maintaining the momentum and security of the assaulting force(s). The ISR effort continues to report enemy repositioning, BDA, and enemy counteractions to the assault. The TF limits enemy repositioning and massing against assaulting forces through intense supporting fires and CAS, a rapid assault, and employment of smoke.

5-19. FORCE-ORIENTED ATTACK AGAINST A MOVING ENEMY FORCE

The TF is likely to attack a moving enemy force, especially during a counterattack, spoiling attack, or exploitation or as a result of a movement to contact.

a. **Planning**. In a force-oriented attack against a moving enemy force, the TF normally organizes in the same manner as a movement to contact. Key planning considerations (Figure 5-15, page 5-44) are discussed below.

(1) ***Where to Fight the Enemy***. The decision on where to fight the enemy requires that the commander have information dominance over the enemy. The commander bases his decision on a clear understanding of the effects of the terrain, the enemy situation, and what the enemy is expected to do. The commander and his staff select the most advantageous location to fight the engagement and then determine other possible locations where the engagement may occur based on a slower- or faster-than-expected enemy advance or the enemy's use of an unlikely avenue of approach. They identify these areas as objectives or AOs. The commander and staff must develop control measures to help coordinate actions throughout the TF's battle space. The commander, assisted primarily by the S3 and S2, develops DPs for the commitment of the TF to each location based on relative locations and rates of movement of the TF and the enemy. The S2 carefully selects NAIs to identify the enemy's rate and direction of movement to support the commander's decision of where to fight the engagement.



OPTION EA RAIN
Enemy's lead company crossing PL Nita, Co engages enemy in EA Rain. (Co vic PL Sally)

OPTION EA HAIL
Enemy's lead company moving east through NAI 3, Co engages enemy in EA Hail. (Co vic PL Tracy)

OPTION EA SNOW
Enemy's lead company moving east through NAI 4, Co engages enemy in EA Snow. (Co vic PL Tracy)

OPTION EA SLEET
Enemy's lead company crossing PL Sue, Co engages enemy in EA Sleet.

Figure 5-15. Planning the attack.

(2) ***Maximizing the Advantages of the Terrain***. The commander uses the terrain to maximize the TF's freedom of maneuver and lethality while limiting the freedom of maneuver available to the enemy. He looks for avenues of approach that allow the TF to strike the enemy from a flank or the rear. One or two company teams block the enemy's advance while the other company teams attack into the enemy's flank. In this example, the terrain prevents the enemy from moving away from the main attack while also protecting the TF's flank from an enemy attack (Figure 5-16).

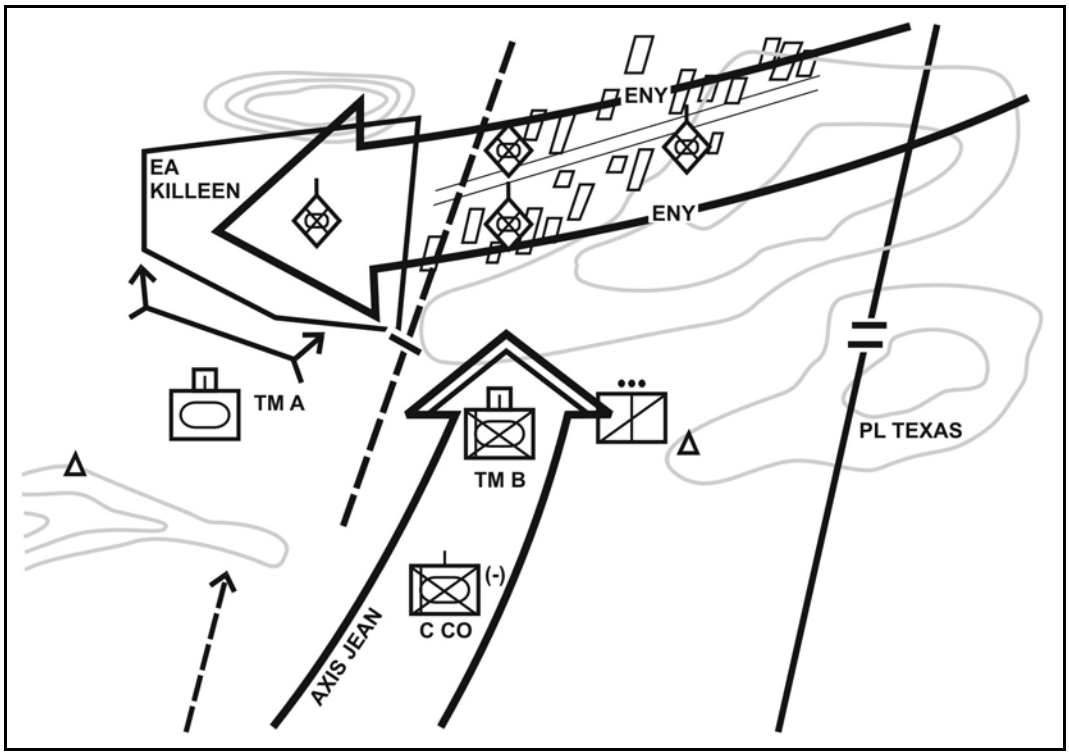


Figure 5-16. Example of a task force flank attack.

(a) Although he develops plans to fight the enemy at the most advantageous location for the TF, the commander retains enough flexibility to attack the enemy effectively regardless of where the engagement develops. The COP provides subordinate commanders the same picture available to the TF commander and enables them to anticipate changes to the base plan. The scheme of maneuver includes provisions to fight the enemy in other AOs or objectives. For simplicity, the commander seeks to keep the scheme of maneuver in each AO or objective as similar as possible.

(b) In some situations, such as a movement to contact, the TF may have constraints in the time or ability to select when and where to fight a moving enemy force. If so, the commander orders the TF into the attack through the use of a FRAGO based on his personal assessment and physical view of the battlefield. As the intelligence community pushes for information, the commander quickly deploys and maneuvers the TF to develop the situation and defeat the enemy.

(3) ***Fire Support***. The following are key considerations for the FS plan.

(a) Use fires to affect the enemy's maneuver well forward of the TF, disrupting the enemy's formations and timetable.

(b) Destroy HPTs and security forces.

(c) Carefully plan triggers, observer locations, and targets to maintain flexibility and ensure achievement of required effects prior to contact with the enemy.

(d) Coordinate and synchronize with brigade the movement and positioning of artillery (coordinate terrain requirements) to support EFSTs within each objective or AO and to engage HPTs before the enemy enters the selected objective or AO.

(e) Retain flexibility to mass fires at the decisive point where the battle may occur.

(f) Plan triggers to put targets into effect and cancel them based on the TF's movement and the commander's decision of where to fight the enemy.

(g) Synchronize the movement and positioning of the mortar platoon with the scheme of maneuver.

(4) ***Engineer Support***. The following are key considerations for the scheme of engineer operations.

(a) Task-organize engineer forces well forward to support breaching.

(b) Normal priority of support is to the lead company team.

(c) Be prepared to bypass or breach enemy situational obstacles.

(d) Integrate situational obstacles with fires to affect the movement of the enemy in support of the commander's intent.

(e) Plan obstacle belts, obstacle control measures, and situational obstacles to support flank security.

(f) Develop and adjust obstacles and triggers for execution based on the TF's movement and the enemy situation.

(5) ***Air Defense Support***. The ADA battery supporting the brigade operates in general support (GS) to the TFs with the normal priority of protection to the main effort. ADA assets shift locations on the battlefield as required by the phase of the operation to maintain adequate air defense coverage of critical forces and events. Normally, Linebacker platoons are forward with the Avenger platoon farther back protecting the brigade CPs and other high-value assets. ADA coverage increases in areas and activities most vulnerable to air attack such as breaching operations or movements through restricted terrain.

(6) ***Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Support***. The NBC assets are employed in a similar manner to their employment in an attack against a stationary force. Smoke and NBC reconnaissance assets typically support the main effort.

(7) ***Combat Service Support***. The following are key considerations for the CSS plan.

(a) Continuously update the CSS plan. Ensure the CSS plan is responsive and flexible enough to support all maneuver options. Plan support from initiation of the operation to the final objective or LOA.

(b) Integrate refueling and resupply operations with the scheme of maneuver.

(c) Weigh the risk the extended distances create for security of MSRs and CSS assets based on the potential of undetected or bypassed enemy forces.

(d) Use all available assets to develop and maintain an accurate enemy picture behind the lead maneuver elements.

(e) Plan and rehearse for enemy contact.

(f) Plan and coordinate the locations, displacements, and routes of CSS assets to maintain responsive support.

(g) Plan and develop triggers for activating and deactivating collection points and LRPs based on the TF's scheme of maneuver.

(h) Plan MEDEVAC, resupply, and equipment recovery to support anticipated engagements within each AO or objective.

b. **Preparation**. Preparation for an attack against a moving enemy force may be limited because the opportunity to attack the enemy at the appropriate time and place depends on the enemy's movement. This forces the TF to focus the preparation on executing fires and maneuver actions within each AO or objective. The commander

prioritizes each AO or objective area to ensure the TF prepares for the most likely engagements first. The commander must ensure all subordinate company teams and supporting forces understand their role in each AO or objective area and the decision point for execution of each. The leaders of the TF rehearse actions for each COA against various enemy conditions to promote flexibility and initiative consistent with the commander's intent. Repetitive rehearsals against likely enemy actions are essential for success at all levels.

c. **Reconnaissance**. The ISR effort focuses on answering the CCIR to support the commander's decisions on when and where to initiate fires, where to fight the enemy, and how best to maneuver the TF against the enemy. The S2 develops NAIs to identify enemy actions and decisions that indicate the enemy's selected COA. The following are key intelligence considerations for attacking a moving enemy force.

(1) ***Understand the Effects of the Terrain***. The commander must understand the effects of terrain on the TF and the enemy. This has the greatest impact on deciding where to fight the enemy. The S2 conducts a detailed terrain analysis and specifically identifies--

- Locations and tactical advantages of key terrain.
- Avenues of approach and mobility corridors for both enemy and friendly forces.
- Advantageous locations for the TF to fight the engagement.
- Danger areas where friendly or enemy forces may become vulnerable. (Examples include restricted terrain, choke points, obstacles, terrain that naturally exposes a flank, and areas dominated by key terrain.)
- Likely rates of movement for both forces.

(2) ***Anticipate the Enemy's Selected COA***. The IPB details how the enemy is likely to move and fight. It emphasizes the enemy's likely formation(s) and routes and how he will attempt to fight the ensuing meeting engagement.

(a) The analysis illustrates the enemy's expected rate of movement and how the enemy force is likely to be arrayed based on a detailed terrain and time-distance analysis. The enemy normally has three general COAs:

- Assume a hasty defense either before or after initial contact to retain control of defensible terrain or limit the advantages the TF may have.
- Attack to defeat or penetrate the TF.
- Attempt to delay or bypass the TF.

(b) The S2 develops enemy COAs based on the enemy's likely objective, capabilities, strength, and known tactics. The S2 determines those enemy actions that may indicate the enemy's selection of a COA and ensures observers are positioned to detect and report these indicators. The S2 must always portray the enemy's flexibility, likely actions, and available maneuver options. The goal is to identify the enemy's most likely COA and have the TF anticipate and prepare for it.

(3) ***Gain and Maintain Contact***. Preferably, the TF establishes contact with the enemy using digital sensor platforms well before it makes physical contact.

(a) The TF, with support from brigade, receives intelligence from battlefield surveillance assets such as radar, UAVs, access to JSTARS, and other sensors used to track the moving enemy force. Intelligence gathered by these sensors helps the TF direct

ground reconnaissance assets to advantageous positions to observe and report information on the enemy. Once made, the TF maintains contact.

(b) The information gained from the sensors as well as ground reconnaissance elements must be shared with all elements of the TF as quickly as possible. Information requirements normally include--

- The enemy's rate and direction of movement.
- The enemy's formation, strength, and composition. This includes locations of security forces, main body, reserves, and artillery formations.
- Enemy actions and decisions that indicate a future enemy action or intention.
- Location of enemy HPTs.
- Location, type, and activity of key combat multipliers the TF commander intends to attack, such as artillery, engineers, air defense, and logistics.
- Enemy vulnerabilities such as exposed flanks or force concentrations at obstacles.

(4) ***Support the TF's Movement***. Reconnaissance and surveillance forces move well forward of the TF. They reconnoiter obstacles and areas that may slow the TF's movement and disrupt the timing and planned location of the attack. They seek to detect obstacles, contaminated areas, enemy security forces, and suitable routes for the TF's use.

(5) ***Report Enemy Actions on Contact***. As the engagement develops, reconnaissance assets continue to report enemy actions, BDA, and locations. Reconnaissance assets must occupy positions that provide good observation of the engagement and are survivable throughout the course of the engagement.

d. **Execution**. The following considerations apply to the conduct of the attack.

(1) ***Maximize the Approach to the Objective***. The TF moves with deliberate speed. By gaining contact with the enemy force quickly through the reconnaissance and surveillance force, the Brigade can use long-range fires and CAS to destroy and disrupt the enemy throughout his formation.

(a) The TF deploys, masses effects, and destroys the remaining enemy before he can adequately react. The commander adjusts the speed of the TF to ensure that fires have set appropriate conditions and that the TF arrives at the designated engagement area (EA) at the proper time in relation to the enemy. Effective reporting and analysis of the enemy's rate and direction of movement by reconnaissance and surveillance elements are critical to the timing of the attack.

(b) The commander seeks to conceal the movement of the TF from the enemy to maintain surprise. The TF, moving dispersed, masks its movement and maximizes its use of routes that provide cover and concealment. The use of all current information available to enhance positive control of movement formations by all subordinate units is essential to the TF's ability to mass against the enemy. The TF employs a robust reconnaissance effort to detect and destroy enemy security forces that may warn the enemy force of friendly actions.

(2) ***Take Action on the Objective***. The TF creates favorable conditions for decisive action by weakening and disrupting the enemy's formation, destroying his security forces, and fixing the enemy's main body. The TF achieves final destruction of the enemy through its main body's attack.

(3) ***Disrupt and Weaken the Enemy's Formation***. The TF employs direct and indirect fires reinforced with situational obstacles to set the conditions for EA fights,

disrupting and weakening the enemy before he gets to the EA. Indirect fires should provide time for the TF to deploy before contact. Scouts normally control these initial fires.

(4) ***Defeat Enemy Security Forces***. The enemy normally employs security forces to protect his main body. The enemy's ability to seize the initiative often rests on his security forces. The TF must avoid, destroy, or fight through the enemy's security forces to gain contact with the bulk of the enemy force. The commander employs fires in conjunction with his advance guard to defeat the enemy's security forces so the TF's main body can decisively attack the bulk of the enemy force. Ideally, the TF's advance guard attacks the enemy's forward or flank security forces to develop the situation. The commander weights the advance guard with maneuver forces and indirect fires in order to destroy the enemy's security force rapidly and gain contact with the enemy's main body before the enemy can effectively react.

(5) ***Fix the Enemy***. The TF normally fixes the enemy main body to create the conditions for the main body's attack. Normally, the TF's advance guard executes this task once it destroys the opposing enemy security force. Indirect fires against the lead enemy forces allow the advance guard to deploy and gain contact with the enemy main body. The advance guard commander keeps the TF commander informed of the enemy's strength and actions. It is paramount that the TF commander receive accurate, timely reports and analysis of the enemy situation. Reconnaissance elements assist the advance guard commander in providing accurate information to the TF commander. The TF commander must know the enemy main body's strength, disposition, and reactions. He uses this information to make final adjustments to the main body's attack.

(6) ***Maneuver the Main Body***. As the advance guard develops the situation, the commander begins to maneuver the main body to a favorable position for commitment.

(a) The commander positions the TF to attack the enemy formation from an assailable flank where its total combat power can be massed against an enemy weakness to reach a quick decision. Rapid movement and massed fires characterize this attack. Indirect fires shift to suppress the enemy force that directly opposes the main body's attack. The main body strikes the enemy force with overwhelming strength and speed. As the main body maneuvers against the enemy, the TF FSO adjusts FSCMs to provide continuous support and ensure force protection.

(b) If the commander determines the enemy force is attempting to bypass or avoid contact, he immediately directs indirect fires to delay and disrupt the enemy's movement away from the TF. The commander maneuvers his forces to quickly destroy or penetrate any enemy forces attempting to fix or delay the TF and strikes the bulk of the evading enemy force from the flank or rear.

(c) Current tactical information is paramount for the rapid commitment of fires and maneuver forces during these decisive maneuvers. All commanders involved must know the location of enemy and friendly forces. Subordinate commanders must anticipate the TF commander's decisions and have their subordinates ready to execute. They must also anticipate the shifting of indirect fires since the fire support elements can see and understand the battle as it takes place. Proper use of the COP enhances the coordination and integration of all elements.

5-20. TERRAIN-ORIENTED ATTACKS

Terrain-oriented attacks require the TF to seize or secure a designated area to support future operations. The TF attacks to seize terrain-oriented objectives for many reasons, for example--

- To seize key terrain or structures such as bridges, airfields, or public services to support follow-on operations.
- To seize terrain such as choke points or routes to block enemy withdrawals, reinforcements, or movements against the brigade's main effort.
- To secure an area to allow future operations such as a lodgment area.

The TF plans and executes terrain-oriented attacks (Figure 5-17) in the same manner as attacks against enemy forces. The major distinction in a terrain-oriented attack is that the TF focuses its efforts on the seizure and holding of terrain instead of the total destruction of the enemy. The commander plans and controls the attack to gain control of the terrain as quickly as possible and conducts only necessary actions against the enemy. Success of the mission does not normally entail decisive action against all enemy forces within the AO. The TF attacks only those enemy forces that directly affect the seizure of the objective or that may impact on the future operation. Other key planning considerations that differ from force-oriented attacks include the following:

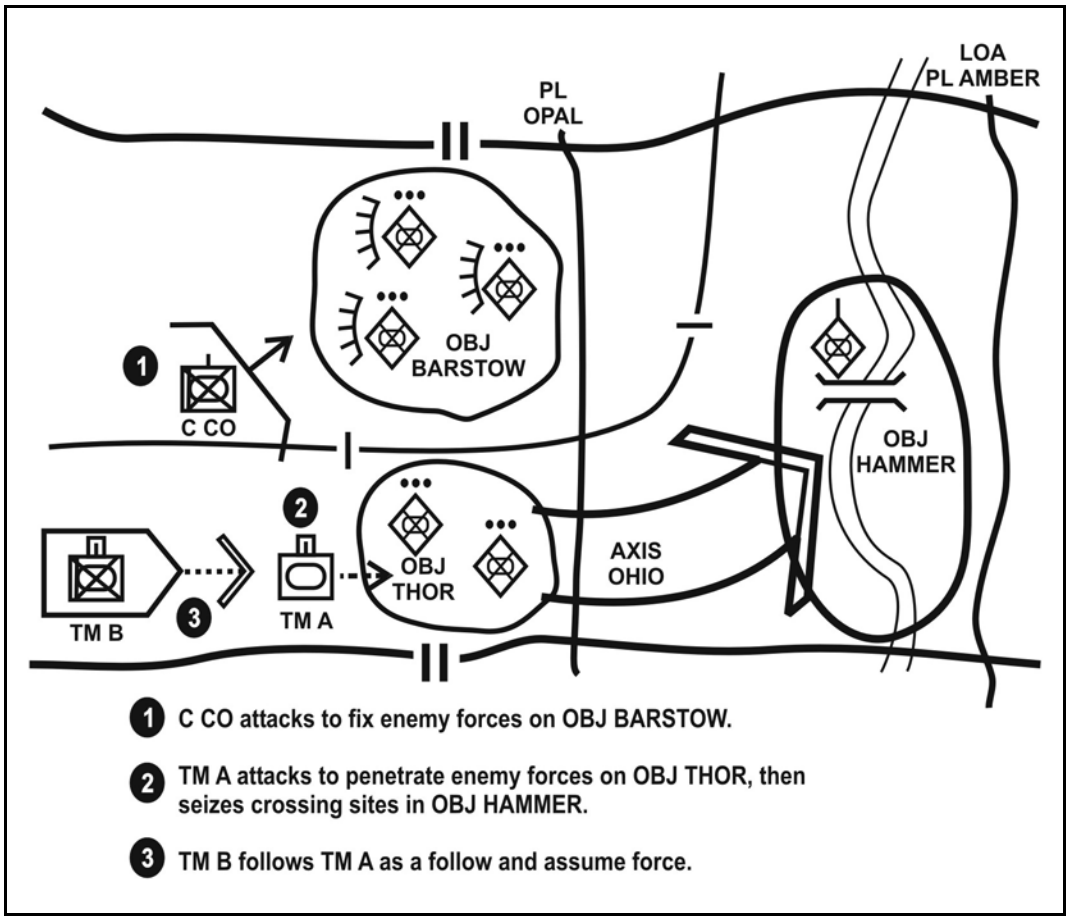


Figure 5-17. Terrain-oriented attack.

a. **Reconnaissance**. The ISR effort, as in other attacks, capitalizes on all the battlefield surveillance assets available to the brigade as well as those that belong to the TF to identify the enemy situation on the objective and any sizable enemy forces within the TF's battlespace. TF ground reconnaissance elements occupy advantageous positions to gain observation and report information on the enemy.

(1) The commander must consider enemy forces within his battlespace, specifically in areas outside his AO but inside his AI, that may react to the TF's seizure of the objective. Once the TF locates enemy forces, reconnaissance forces seek to determine the full extent of the enemy's strength and disposition as well as possible bypasses the TF may exploit.

(2) The commander, assisted by the S2, seeks to identify the possible reactions of enemy forces within his battlespace to the TF's attack. The plan should retain the necessary flexibility to succeed against all likely enemy reactions. As the S2 develops enemy COAs, he must identify those indicators that reveal the enemy's commitment to a future action. He normally considers enemy actions to defend in place, reinforce threatened enemy units, counterattack, delay, or possibly withdraw.

b. **Degree of Risk**. The commander must determine the degree of tactical risk he is willing to accept by leaving or bypassing enemy forces in the TF's AO. He bases this decision on the higher commander's intent and established bypass criteria, the enemy's capabilities, and the commander's assessment of the situation. The commander must recognize the potential effects that bypassed enemy forces may have on the TF's CSS operations and future operations. The commander normally employs economy of force missions to contain, guard, or fix bypassed enemy forces. The tactical risk imposed by these bypassed forces is reduced by accurate and timely reporting of their locations and status by way of FBCB2 throughout the TF, especially to the elements moving behind the maneuver forces in the TF's AO. Once the TF secures the objective, other forces or fires can destroy bypassed enemy forces or force their surrender.

c. **Seizure of the Objective**. Once it seizes the objective, the TF conducts a hasty defense of the area to prevent the enemy from recapturing it. The commander seeks to position his forces in a manner that best defends the objective while allowing a rapid transition to follow-on operations. Reconnaissance and security forces push forward of the objective to identify any enemy forces approaching the secured objective. Engineers provide countermobility and survivability support as required.

5-21. EXPLOITATION

Exploitation is not normally conducted below the brigade level. An exploitation often follows a successful attack to take advantage of a weakened or collapsed enemy. The purpose of exploitation can vary, but it generally focuses on capitalizing on a temporary advantage or preventing the enemy from establishing an organized defense or conducting an orderly withdrawal. To accomplish this, the brigade (or higher level unit) attacks rapidly over a broad front to prevent the enemy from establishing a defense, organizing an effective rear guard, withdrawing, or regaining balance. The brigade secures objectives, severs escape routes, and destroys all enemy forces. Failure to exploit success aggressively gives the enemy time to reconstitute an effective defense or regain the initiative by a counterattack.

a. The conditions for exploitation develop very quickly. Often the lead TF in contact identifies the collapse of the enemy's resistance. The brigade commander must receive accurate assessments and reports of the enemy situation to capitalize on the opportunity for exploitation. Typical indications of the conditions for exploitation include--

- A significant increase in EPWs.
- An increase in abandoned enemy equipment and materiel.
- The overrunning of enemy artillery, C2 facilities, and logistics sites.
- A significant decrease in enemy resistance or in organized fires and maneuver.
- An intermixing of support and combat vehicles in formations and columns.
- An increase in enemy rearward movement, especially of reserves and FS units.

b. Should the TF conduct exploitation as part of a larger operation, it may have the mission to seize a terrain-oriented objective. In this case, the TF avoids decisive engagement and moves to the objective as quickly as possible. If assigned a force-oriented objective, the TF seeks and destroys enemy forces anywhere within its AO. The exploitation ends when the enemy reestablishes its defense, all organized enemy resistance breaks down, or the friendly force culminates logistically or physically.

5-22. PURSUIT

The TF does not conduct a pursuit as an independent action. Even at the brigade level, the risks associated with a pursuit operation generally outweigh the benefits. However, if provided aviation assets or additional ground maneuver units, the brigade can conduct a pursuit. If so, the TF can serve as the direct-pressure force or the encircling force.

a. A pursuit is ordered when the enemy can no longer maintain a coherent position and tries to escape. Once ordered, the COP between the pressure and encircling forces is critical for the necessary synchronization. The brigade's mission is the destruction of the enemy rather than avoiding enemy contact.

b. The direct-pressure force organizes for a movement to contact and prepares to conduct a series of hasty attacks. Encirclement results when a force is able to sever the enemy's lines of communication and prevent his reinforcement or escape. The encircling force must have greater mobility than the enemy. The encircling force is usually created from uncommitted forces and must be strong enough to protect itself from the enemy's reserves and what is left of the main body. The direct-pressure force must track the movement of and coordinate with the encircling force. Timing is key to success of the mission, and information systems are key to this synchronization. The encircling force should be prepared to conduct a hasty defense until the direct-pressure force succeeds in destroying or forcing the enemy to surrender. The ultimate goal of a pursuit is to fix the enemy between the direct-pressure force and the encircling force and then to destroy the enemy.

5-23. SPECIAL-PURPOSE ATTACKS

The TF can launch attacks with various purposes to achieve different results. These forms of attack include raids, feints, demonstrations, counterattacks, and spoiling attacks.

a. **Raid**. A raid is a deliberate attack that involves the swift, temporary penetration of enemy territory for a specific mission. A raid usually ends with a planned withdrawal.

Raids are usually small-scale attacks, requiring detailed intelligence, preparation, and planning.

(1) Typical raid missions accomplish the following:

- Capture prisoners, installations, or enemy materiel.
- Destroy enemy materiel or installations.
- Obtain specific information on an enemy unit such as its location, disposition, strength, or operating scheme.
- Deceive or harass enemy forces.
- Liberate captured friendly personnel.

(2) The raiding force may vary in size from an infantry platoon to a battalion task force. It may operate within or outside the TF's supporting range. The raiding force moves to its objective by land, air, or water for a quick, violent attack. Once it completes the raid mission, the raiding force quickly withdraws along a different route. The following are specific planning considerations for a raid mission.

(a) Conduct detailed reconnaissance and maintain constant surveillance of the raid objective to ensure the enemy situation remains unchanged and within the capability of the raiding force. Support from outside the TF helps to provide the intelligence needed to plan and conduct a raid successfully.

(b) Position FS systems to provide immediate responsive fires during the approach, actions on the objective, and withdrawal. Interdiction fires, deception fires, counterfires, and situational obstacles reduce the enemy's ability to react to the raid.

(c) Security is vital because the raiding force is vulnerable to attack from all directions.

(d) Establish clear abort criteria for the raid. These may include loss of personnel, equipment, or support assets and changes in the enemy situation.

(e) Develop contingency plans for contact prior to and after actions on the objective.

(f) Plan casualty evacuation and raiding force extraction throughout the entire depth of the operation.

(g) Plan rally points for units to assemble to prepare for the attack or to assemble after the mission is complete and the force is ready to withdraw.

(h) Consider logistical factors such as the types and numbers of vehicles and weapons that the raiding party will have, movement distance, length of time the raiding party will operate in enemy territory, and expected enemy resistance. Aircraft or linkup provides CASEVAC or resupply of the raiding force, if required, during the withdrawal.

(i) Conduct withdrawal over a different route than that used to approach the objective.

(3) The TF may participate in an artillery raid as part of a division or corps operation. In such an operation, the TF supports the positioning of artillery. If necessary, the TF fights through enemy forces to get the artillery unit to the position required to strike the enemy deep as part of the division or corps effort to set the conditions for an attack at their level.

b. **Feint**. A feint is a form of an attack intended to deceive the enemy and draw attention and combat power (if possible) away from the main effort.

(1) Feints must be of sufficient strength and composition to cause the desired enemy reaction. Feints must appear real; therefore, some contact with the enemy is necessary. The feint is most effective under the following conditions:

- When it reinforces the enemy's expectations.
- When it appears to be a definite threat to the enemy.
- When the enemy has a large reserve that it has consistently committed early.
- When there are several feasible COAs open to the attacker.

(2) The purposes of a feint may include the following:

- To force the enemy to employ his reserves away from the main effort or to remain in position.
- To attract enemy supporting fires away from the main effort.
- To force the enemy to reveal defensive fires or weaknesses.
- To accustom the enemy to shallow attacks in order to gain surprise with another attack.

(3) Planning for a feint mission follows the same sequence as any other attack. Special planning considerations include the following:

- Ensure the feint is resourced to appear as the main effort or as a significant threat to the enemy.
- Establish clear guidance regarding force preservation.
- Ensure adequate means of detecting the desired enemy reaction.
- Designate clear disengagement criteria for the feinting force.
- Assign attainable objectives.
- Issue clear follow-on missions to the feinting force.

c. **Demonstration**. A demonstration is a form of an attack used for deception. It is made with the intention of deceiving the enemy; however, contact with enemy forces is not sought. Demonstrations support a division or corps plan; TFs do not conduct demonstrations alone. Demonstrations must be clearly visible to the enemy without being transparently deceptive in nature. Demonstration forces use fires, movement of maneuver forces, smoke, EW assets, and communication equipment to support the deception plan. Planning considerations include the following:

- Establish a LOA for demonstration forces that allows the enemy to see the demonstration but not to engage it effectively with direct fires.
- Establish other security measures necessary to prevent engagement by the enemy.
- Employ demonstrations to reinforce the enemy’s expectations and contribute to the main effort.
- Develop contingency plans for enemy contact to avoid becoming decisively engaged.
- Issue clear follow-on missions to the demonstration force.
- Establish the means to determine the effectiveness of the demonstration and assess its effect on the enemy.

d. **Counterattack**. A counterattack is an attack launched from the defense to defeat an attacking enemy force or regain key terrain and ultimately regain the initiative. The counterattack is often the deciding action in the defense and becomes the main effort upon commitment. The commander may plan counterattacks as part of the TF’s defensive plan, or the TF may be the counterattack force for the brigade or division.

e. **Spoiling Attack**. A spoiling attack is an attack launched from the defense to disrupt the enemy’s attack preparations. Spoiling attacks focus on the enemy’s critical

systems and forces that have the greatest impact on his ability to mount an attack. Lucrative targets include C2 systems, intelligence assets, FS, and logistics. Spoiling attacks may be conducted as often as needed to deny adequate attack preparation to the enemy. The TF normally conducts a spoiling attack as part of the higher headquarters operation. Spoiling attacks are planned and executed in the same manner as an attack.

Section IV. TRANSITION OPERATIONS

The TF spends minimum time after concluding an engagement or actions on the objective to consolidate and reorganize before continuing the attack. If consolidation and reorganization is required, the commander decides the best time and location to facilitate future operations and provides force protection. The TF must maintain a high degree of security when performing consolidation and reorganization activities.

5-24. CONSOLIDATION

Consolidation is the process of organizing and strengthening a newly captured position. The TF may need to consolidate to reorganize, avoid culmination, prepare for an enemy counterattack, or allow time for movement of adjacent units. The TF makes consolidation plans for every mission, updates them during the attack, and passes them to units as the attack is completed. Actions during consolidation include--

- Reestablishing communications (if required).
- Eliminating pockets of enemy resistance.
- Establishing security consistent with the threat.
- Establishing contact (electronic, physical, or both) with adjacent friendly units.
- Preparing defensive positions.
- Clearing obstacles or improving lanes to support friendly movement and reorganization activities.
- Planning and preparing for future operations.
- Destroying captured enemy equipment and processing EPWs.
- Maintaining contact with the enemy and conducting reconnaissance.
- Cross-leveling and conducting emergency resupply.

The TF maintains contact with the enemy by redirecting the scout platoon, directing small-unit patrols, pulling the latest intelligence from the higher brigade ACT and S2, and possibly conducting limited objective attacks.

5-25. REORGANIZATION

Reorganization planning begins before and continues during the attack as losses occur. Company teams must feed reports to the TF as losses occur so that the information entered into the CSS system allows reporting of casualties and movement of needed resupply and or replacements forward to arrive as the TF begins reorganization. The TF immediately takes all measures required to maintain its combat effectiveness or return to a specified level of combat capability. If extensive reorganization is required, the TF conducts it during consolidation. Reorganization tasks include--

- Establishing, if required, new tactical internet, unit task organization (UTO), and digital connectivity (in units equipped with FBCB2).
- Establishing and maintaining security.

- Reestablishing the TF chain of command, key staff positions, and C2 facilities lost before or during the battle.
- Treating and evacuating casualties.
- Recovering and repairing damaged equipment as necessary.
- Redistributing ammunition, supplies, and equipment as necessary.
- Conducting resupply and refueling operations.
- Repositioning C2 facilities, communications assets, and logistics for future operations.
- Reorganizing company teams and platoons if losses have occurred.

5-26. CONTINUING OPERATIONS

For all missions assigned, the TF should plan for exploiting success. However, at the conclusion of an engagement, the commander may be forced to defend. The commander considers the higher commander's concept of operations, friendly capabilities, and the enemy situation when making the decision to defend or continue offensive operations.

5-27. DEFEND

The TF conducts a defense when directed by higher headquarters, to repel an enemy counterattack, to avoid culmination, or to complete reorganization activities. The TF occupies the most defensible terrain, which may require the TF to attack to seize defensible terrain. Normally, the TF pushes its scout platoon out to establish a security area to provide reaction time and early warning of enemy actions. Subordinate company teams occupy designated AOs, quickly array forces, and develop fire plans. Normally, the commander seeks to array company teams to achieve an adequate level of defense and facilitate future operations. Engineers provide survivability support and emplace obstacles as required to support the defense.